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MAN-HUNTING IN THE DESERT

CAPT. A.E. HAYNES. R.E.

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EXPEDITION

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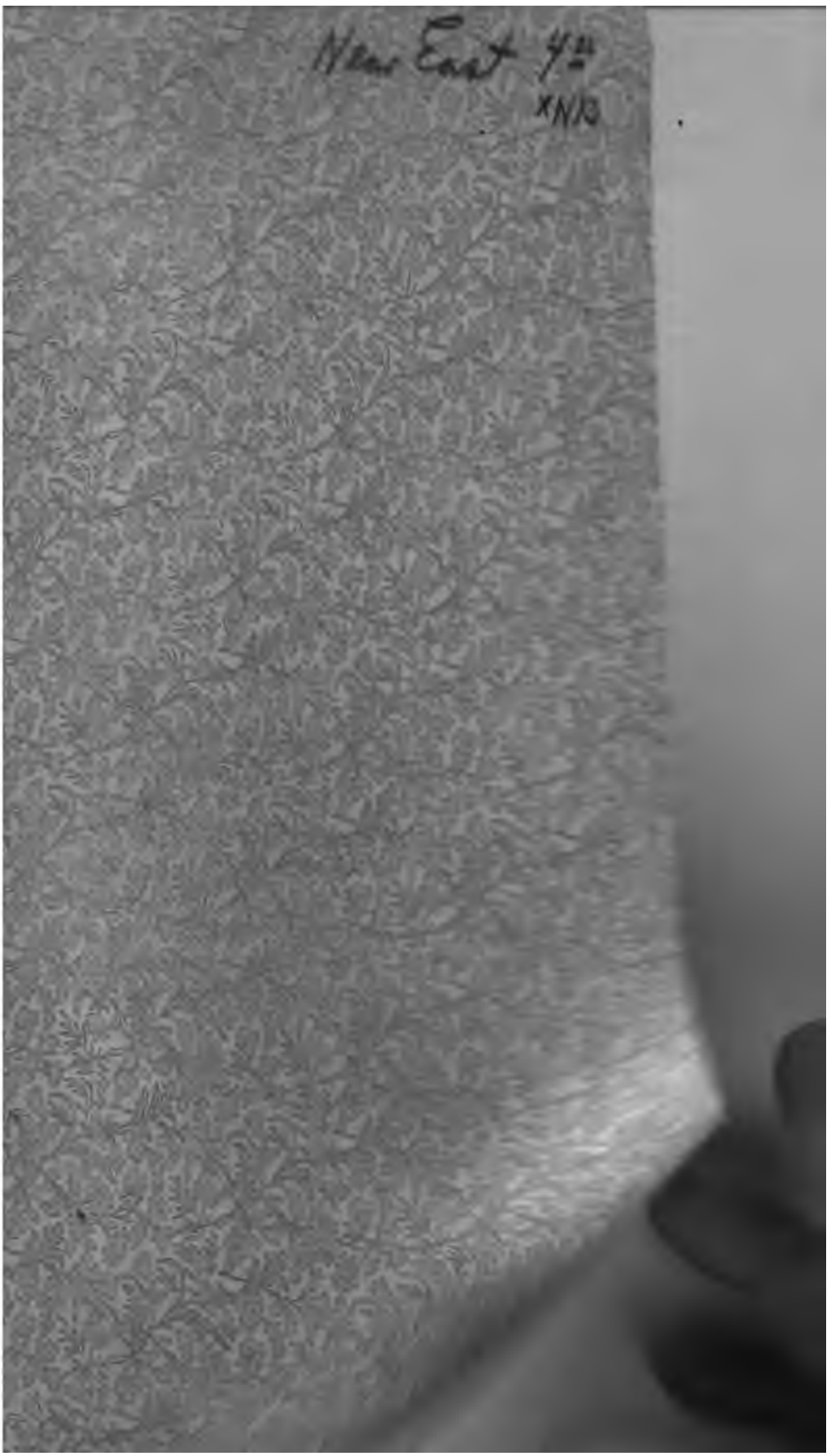
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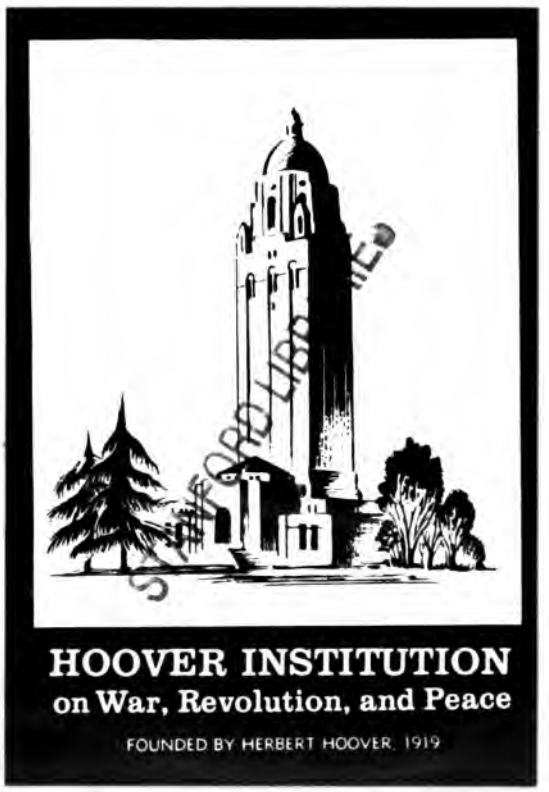

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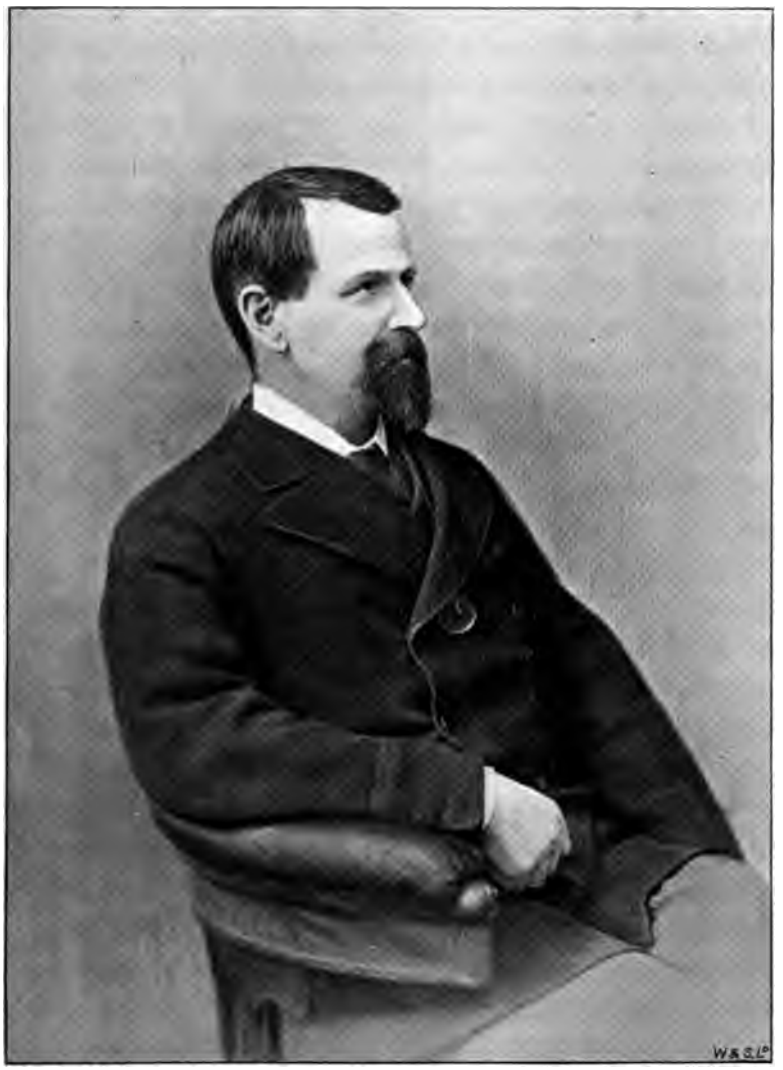

COLONEL WARREN, 1883:
NOW
MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

MAN-HUNTING IN THE DESERT,

BEING A NARRATIVE OF THE

PALMER SEARCH-EXPEDITION

(1882, 1883).

BY

ALFRED E. HAYNES,

Captain, Royal Engineers.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WALTER BESANT.

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YMANLI ASU

TO THE

Right Honourable the Earl of Northbrook,

UNDER WHOSE DIRECTION

THE PALMER SEARCH-EXPEDITION

WAS LAUNCHED AND CARRIED TO

A CONCLUSION,

THESE PAGES

ARE DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THIS book has been written in pursuance of a plan that was formed ten years ago in the desert of Arabia. It was then thought that an account of the detective and man-hunting operations of the Palmer Search-Expedition would interest the public if put before them with any literary skill; and the requisite literary skill we looked for from the pen of Major-General Sir Charles Warren. However, the pressure of public work since then has forbidden his participating in the work to the desired extent, and has resulted in its being relegated to my inexperienced hands.

The interval that has elapsed since the events herein related took place permits a dispassionate judgment being formed upon them, as it relieves them from all consideration of policy or party and brings them within the range of history; while Time, the great healer of human sorrow, has in the interval somewhat assuaged the pain that a reiteration of the circumstances which led to the Expedition might have caused ten years ago.

Sir Charles Warren has given me notes upon which Chapters I., II., III., and IV., and parts of XII. are

based, and Appendices A, B, and C are from his pen. With these important contributions my task has been rendered a comparatively light one, and it has been further lightened by the kind assistance of Mr. Walter Besant, the author of Professor Palmer's Memoir, &c., who pays a last tribute to his friend's memory in the Introduction which he has written.

A. E. H.

CHATHAM, *February*, 1894.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS book should have been published ten years ago as a sequel to my "Life and Achievements of Edward Henry Palmer" (Murray, 1883). That it has been so long delayed is due to the fact that the author has been engaged on foreign and colonial service during this time, and has not been able to put together his notes and sketches made during the expedition of justice in which he was a member.

Palmer's memory, save among his friends, of whom he had a larger circle than falls to the lot of most, may perhaps be less vivid than when the whole world talked of the murdered scholar, and of the great service he rendered to his country, and of the funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral, where the poor remains—all that had been left by the jackals—were reverently laid in the crypt in the presence of a great company who mourned deeply and truly. The tablet commemorating his death stands in the wall under one of the windows in the crypt; the portrait of him in his Oriental robes, as the Syrian Effendi Abdullah, hangs in the hall of his college; his books continue to keep his memory green. There wanted only this volume to show how justice, swift, stern, not to be escaped, fell upon his murderers.

Let me quote a passage from the preface of that book to which I have referred above, before I remind the readers

of this book of the chief events in the life of Edward Palmer. I there said—

> This is the history of a life which in many respects is unique. Palmer was a scholar and student, most earnest and resolute, yet always with the heart of a boy; so great a linguist that he stood alone, yet always modest, full of reliance in himself and his powers, yet never vainglorious. Always at work, yet always with time for leisure: the most sincere man in the world when he had a purpose in view, yet the most delightful and the most mirthful of companions.

These words are a summary of the man's character. They touch the true note—they explain the man. I do not think, looking back after all these years, that I could have put the case better. Such he was—such the man whom we loved. Edward Henry Palmer was born in 1840, and died in 1882. He was a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge; he was Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge; in the last years of his life he was a brilliant leader writer to the *Standard;* he has given the world the best translation we have of the Koran; he was a traveller in the Peninsula of Sinai and the Desert of the Exodus; he translated the New Testament into Arabic, he wrote grammars of the Arabic, Hindustani and Persian languages; he wrote the "Life of Haroun Alraschid," of which a new Edition appeared only yesterday (Marcus Ward and Co.); he made translations of poems from the Persian, the Arabic, the Scandinavian, into other languages; he published original poems; he wrote "The History of Jerusalem," now in its third or fourth edition; he wrote "The History of the Jewish Nation," and many other works. In addition to these, he wrote verses in the most delightful vein of humour. Apart from his writings and the serious work of his life, he was an adept in the art of legerde-

main; he could draw and paint admirably; he was a mesmerist; he was a most wonderful *raconteur;* he was acquainted with nearly all the European as well as the Oriental languages, and he was well known to all English gipsies as one who knew as much as they knew themselves of their language and their manners, insomuch that they came to the conclusion that he was himself a gipsy, disguised, for reasons connected with the higher and bolder knavery, as a gentleman of England.

Let me show Palmer as a poet. Here is a poem translated from the Scandinavian. I give it because it seems to me so perfectly beautiful, sad, and touching:

Like birds of passage, after winter's days returning
To lake-land home and rest,
I come now unto thee, my foster-valley, yearning
For long-lost childhood's rest.

Full many a sea since then from thy dear strands has torn me,
And many a chilly year;
Full many a joy since then those far-off lands have borne me,
And many a bitter tear.

Here am I back once more.—Great Heaven! there stands the dwelling
Which erst my cradle bore,
The self-same sound, bay, grove and hilly range upswelling:
My world in days of yore.

All as before.—Trees in the selfsame verdant dresses
With the same crowns are crowned;
The tracts of heaven, and all the woodland's far recesses,
With well-known songs resound.

There with the crowd of flower-nymphs still the wave is playing,
As erst, so light and sweet;
And from dim wooded aits I hear the echoes straying
Glad youthful tones repeat.

All as before.—But my own self no more remaineth,
Glad valley! as of old;
My passion quenched long since, no flame my cheek retaineth,
My pulse now beateth cold.

I know not how to prize the charms that thou possessest,
Thy lavish gifts of yore;
What thou through whispering brooks, or through thy flowers expressest,
I understand no more.

Dead is mine ear to harp-strings which thy gods are ringing
From out thy streamlet clear,
No more the elfin hosts all frolicsome and singing
Upon the meads appear.

I went so rich, so rich from thee, my cottage lowly,
So full of hopes untold,
And with me feelings, nourished in thy shadows holy,
That promised days of gold.

The memory of thy wondrous spring-times went beside me,
And of thy peaceful ways,
And thy good spirits, borne within me, seemed to guide me
E'en from my earliest days.

And what have I brought back from yon world wide and dreary?
A snow-encumbered head,
A heart with sorrow sickened, and with falsehood weary,
And longing to be dead.

I crave no more, of all that once was in my keeping,
Dear mother! but one thing:
Grant me a grave, where still thy fountain fair is weeping,
And where thy poplars spring!

So shall I dream on, mother! to thy calm breast owing
A faithful shelter then,
And live in every floweret, from mine ashes growing,
A guiltless life again.

And I should like to quote on Palmer's position as a journalist, the words of Mr. Robert Wilson, now also

dead, who was at one time assistant editor of the *Standard*:

I have been often asked what sort of subjects Palmer liked to write about. The answer is, he wrote with delight about anything that was suggested to him, provided it had human interest in it. Hence he discoursed best upon certain themes such as gipsies, vagrants and vagabonds, Oriental life and manners, folk-lore and popular antiquities. He was very fond also of writing about crimes and disasters, and strange law cases or famous trials, and his light and playful wit stood him in good stead when he dealt with what are called social questions. He had an idea that he was an authority on questions of Free Trade and Commercial Tariffs, but I never discovered that he had any profound knowledge of economic science; and from his talk I came to the conclusion that what he knew of the subject, accurate as it was, went little beyond the speeches in Parliament, and the ephemeral criticism of the day. Perhaps there is no better illustration of his power of rapidly mastering a subject than the suddenness with which he came to take a great interest in Elementary Education, especially in connection with the politics of the London School Board. I really think he was one of the few men in London who could write well and safely on this topic. Yet nearly all his knowledge of it he acquired, in the first instance, by having a few conversations with an intelligent member of the Board, from whom he obtained a vast pile of formidable-looking documents, the contents of which his friends used to regard with awe, as containing—so he used with serio-comic solemnity to aver—the key to one of the most inscrutable of mysteries. Palmer considered his career as a journalist in London, short as it was, one of the pleasantest episodes of his life. Those who were associated with him in that career professionally can say that they reckoned his companionship one of the brightest and happiest of their experiences. He was—

> The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
> The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit
> In doing courtesies;

and what he was to me he was to all who worked with him.

He was a worker of the most extraordinary vigour and industry. Nothing seemed to tire him. He took upon himself the heaviest burdens, he accepted responsibilities

to an extent which would have been impossible for other men; at the very time when he went out to the East on his last mission, he was writing leaders—four or five a week—for the *Standard;* reviews on Oriental subjects for the *Times;* articles for the *Saturday Review*, the *Athenæum*, and the *Academy;* he was writing for the "Encyclopædia Britannica;" he was editing, with me, the "Memoirs of the Scenery of Western Palestine," a great work in eight quarto volumes; he was examining for the Civil Service Commission; he was lecturing at Cambridge. With all this work he found time for an afternoon talk at the Savile Club, for an hour of advice and help for a man in trouble, for an expedition to see his friends the Lascars at the Foreign Sailor's Home; and all the time he was fighting against a cruel asthma.

Here let me again copy from my "Life," the drawing which I there essayed of his character, and the strange weird charm of the man.

It was a charm of manner utterly unlike any that I have seen in other men; it is difficult to explain in what it lay; yet it was there, and it subdued all men, except those whom he did not like: and these were few. It was caused chiefly by his extraordinary sympathy; it seemed as if, whoever approached him, Palmer involuntarily put himself into that man's place and assumed that man's attitude. It was not effort, or affectation, or pretence, or hypocrisy, or acting. It was a natural, gracious, and extraordinary sympathy. Women, who possess this strange faculty generally to a much greater degree than men, are liable to be led away by it into extravagances, hysterical passions, blind obedience, absolute submission of the will. They are carried into slavery by means of it. Palmer, on the other hand, by means of his strangely sympathetic nature, influenced or commanded those whom he knew. I am sure there is not one of his friends who will not own, without any shame, that Palmer could, and very often did, influence him more than any other man. We all, though we do not, perhaps, like to think so, lean

greatly upon each other, and are guided and influenced by the opinions of our friends far more than we believe; to use the expression of the artisan when he wishes to describe a man who is easily influenced by others, we are all, more or less, "cakes": that is, we may be moulded like dough. Palmer was the man to whom everybody confided his affairs, even the most secret and private affairs, and asked his counsel and advice.

Another cause of this strange charm was certainly his gentle manner, his soft voice, his large and luminous eyes. Small as he was in stature, he was never insignificant; whenever he entered a room one felt there was another man, of larger growth than most, in it. And this, although he never in the least degree asserted himself, anywhere or in any way, but always retained the same quiet, unpretending manner, as if a back place, somewhere in the pit, at the Play of the world would perfectly content him, and others might occupy the stalls. And then, again, there was a curious contrast, which the prejudices of some unhappy persons may present to them as more or less of an incongruity, between the wonderful learning of the man, his unrivalled linguistic power, and the boyish playfulness which he always retained, so that, without ever being a jack-pudding, or a tom-fool, or a buffoon, or a practical joker, or a comic man, or in any way losing his self-respect, he was always surrounded with a pleasant atmosphere of cheerfulness, which he carried about with him. Why should not a great scholar be also a man of joyous nature?

Again, one could never forget with him the intensely earnest and serious side of his character. There never was any man with a greater ardour for knowledge, a greater enthusiasm for learning, a stronger resolution to achieve learning. I have endeavoured to show this in the story of his early years, where it has been seen how he taught himself Romany, Italian, and French, with no other assistance than his own dogged perseverance and determination; and in the story of his early manhood, when, with a kind of ferocity, he threw himself upon three Oriental languages, and "tore the heart out of them;" and in his ill-paid work for an ungrateful University; and in his journalistic work; and even in those things in which he made his amusement. And, as there has never been any greater master of Persian, Arabic, and Urdu—though there may have been, and perhaps still are, greater *scholars*, as we commonly

reckon scholarship—that is, by grammar—so there never has been, since the time when the first alphabet was created by Providence for the use of the first man who loved letters, any more determined, resolute, and enthusiastic student.

Captain Haynes, in what follows, gives a brief account of Palmer's mission. Perhaps the time has not come to tell the whole truth concerning this expedition. Things are known—I do not speak of things connected with his instructions, his powers, or the Government—which are not easy to prove, yet are very well known, to a few. It is sufficient here to say that the real murderers of this scholar and of the two gallant officers who fell with him were not the wretched men who were rightly hanged for being the tools, but others.

One of the last letters Palmer wrote was to myself. In 1883, when I wrote his life, I had mislaid this letter. I could find it nowhere in spite of long search. Too late, it turned up in the place where I had put it for perfect safety. I reproduce it here—the last few lines in both sheets were torn off by some accident when the letter reached me.

Wady Magharah,
Desert of the Tîh.
July 22, 1882.

My dear Besant,—For personal discomfort I can recommend travel in the desert in Midsummer, with the Arabs all in a state of devildom, and Turkish and Egyptian soldiers to dodge. At Jaffa and Gaza people thought me mad, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting anyone to fetch my Arabs. I offered one man three dollars a day and he would not go. However, here I am, and thus far I have had a very successful journey, having got hold of the big sheikhs, and got the promise of 50,000 men. Arabi Pasha has got . . . . . [a small part of the letter is here torn off]—am going to send 10,000 Tîyahah and Terebîn against them as soon as I get to Suez. The getting there, though, is difficult, and I am at present rather like a rat in a trap. I shall either have a gunboat sent for me to the Sinai

coast, or I shall have to get a couple of hundred men and fight my way through the Egyptian guards. It is a queer sensation to have one's throat in constant jeopardy, but I don't mind it as I feel quite cool, and sure of success.

Explanation is quite out of the question, but if I stop till the cool weather—and I don't suppose I shall get back home till the end of the campaign—I may be able to run down to Akabah; the Bedouin will do anything for me. Why did you not make "They were married," longer? I . . . . [here comes the torn part]—off hand, and am now bookless. I expect a man in from Suez to-morrow with letters and then I shall know my plans better. I hope he won't get killed, because if the Egyptians get hold of my letters things won't be nice for me.

Lord Northbrook said that he looked upon my task as the most important one to the success of the campaign. And Admiral Seymour, with whom I breakfasted the morning I left (iced figs—oh! Lord!), congratulated me on my "pluck in venturing into the desert at such a time." Excuse my vain-glory—I am the only European on Egyptian territory who is not under the protection of the guns of the fleet.

The Aiyadi Arabs—Arabi's lot—have just sneaked some camels, and my sheikh, with some pals, has gone off in war costume to kill and slay. This is a *casus belli*, and will make my ragamuffins doubly eager to do the little job I asked them, and drive the intruders back home. It is all very romantic, but a nuisance when you are in the middle of it, and the tent is so shockingly hot at midday—that is now—and I pant like the hart for cooling B. and S. in a thirsty land where no B. and S. is. If ever I should get back again we will dine together immediately and drink iced champagne. I should like to sit in a fishmonger's shop beside the block of ice, and order . . . . [here the torn piece]—skins, hard goat and Arab bread are but sorry fare. Do write to me and tell me all the news. I haven't heard from a soul since I left, except a telegram from the Admiralty in Alexandria. I am looking forward with some little excitement to the advent of my wild postman to-morrow.

He *has* come back, and has brought me a "Homeward Mail"! It is a present from the P. and O. agent! My letters are at the Egyptian post, and no one dares to go for them. Hooray!! This is getting Mark Tapleyish. Let us be cheerful.

I have invented a plan for having all the comforts of an

Arabian summer journey at home. You get a huge cucumber frame and walk about under it, while blast furnaces are lighted around you. From a number of holes hot air and fine sand are blown by means of compressed air into your face. After eight hours you sit down to a piece of boiled boot, washed down with warm ditch-water, and there you are—cue for the band! This is bitter sarcasm but not exaggeration.

Suez, 1st August.

All right! I dodged the sentries, but had to do it at night. Have been travelling twenty-four hours and am rather beat. Will write more next mail. This is just going out. Best regards to . . . . and all sorts of good wishes to yourself, Ever yours, E. H. PALMER.

This was the last letter I had from him. With these few words of preface let us ask Captain Haynes to tell his tale.

WALTER BESANT.

HAMPSTEAD,
Feb., 1894.

"Man-Hunting in the Desert."

CHAPTER I.

THE EGYPTIAN QUESTION IN THE SUMMER OF 1882. PALMER'S MISSION IN THE DESERT. ANTECEDENTS OF PROFESSOR PALMER AND CAPTAIN GILL. DISAPPEARANCE OF PALMER'S PARTY. DESPATCH OF COLONEL WARREN. ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. INFORMATION OBTAINED AT SUEZ. CAPTAIN FOOTE'S INQUIRIES. CONDITION OF SUEZ. A WATER-FAMINE THREATENED. COLONEL WARREN ORDERED TO TOR.

THE circumstances which led to the British occupation of Egypt are still tolerably fresh in the minds of the public, although a decade has passed away since we gave hostages to fortune by venturing on armed interposition amongst the dwellers on the Nile. Nevertheless, it is necessary, for the elucidation of this narrative, which is but an episode in the Egyptian Campaign of 1882, to refer, here and there, to the events which led to and accompanied that interposition; but—and this I regard in the light of a solemn engagement—no attempt will be made to follow the military operations further than is absolutely necessary to throw light upon the matter in hand.

In the early part of the year, when this narrative commences, the interest of all Europe was centred on the Suez Canal, as distinct from Egypt; and the desire to preserve its neutrality, and to prevent its falling under the

sway of an adversary, was an important factor in the politics of every great Power. Owing to the disturbed and impoverished state of Egypt at this period, our highway to India was in peril. A *Jihâd*, or "Holy War," was being actively advocated in Syria, as well as in Egypt, and there was reason to fear that the wild denizens of the desert would assume the offensive, and seriously compromise the situation by some exasperating action against European ships passing through the Canal. Great Britain was therefore bound to take some prompt action for the speedy pacification of Egypt; and, while it was necessary that she should so regulate her conduct as to avoid entanglement in a colossal struggle with other nations, it was further essential to endeavour to prevent the pacification of Egypt leading to a war of creeds—Moslem against Christian.

Under such circumstances, the despatch of Professor Palmer to the Desert of the Tîh was a happy conception, which, in effect, met with a success which, perhaps, cannot be truly estimated, owing to the disastrous death of the erudite Orientalist. In the course of these pages the circumstances under which Palmer and his companions lost their lives will be dealt with; but, when all is said, the public can never know to what extent his efforts for his country contributed towards the successful results of the campaign. It is easy to imagine circumstances under which, if Palmer had not been through the desert, the Bedouin of Arabia might have hampered our Expeditionary Force and impeded its progress.

We learn from the various memoirs of Professor Palmer and Captain Gill, R.E., that the latter only arrived in London from Tripoli on June 16th, 1882, and was at once employed by Lord Northbrook, then First Lord of the Admiralty, in collecting information

as to the Bedoui tribes adjoining the Canal. With this object in view he called upon Palmer on June 24th, and henceforward the latter was closely occupied on the matter. The questions arose as to whether the Bedouin were likely to give trouble in the Canal, and whether they could by any manner of means be detached from Arabi Pasha's interest; and when it was inquired who would go out into the desert and report on its condition, Professor Palmer consented to undertake the dangerous and difficult attempt. He accordingly left London on a secret mission on Friday, June 30th, *viâ* Brindisi, arriving at Alexandria on July 6th. The writer of his memoir states that great precautions were adopted to secure secrecy as to the work he had in hand. It was given out that he was going to the East for his health; for a geographical mission; it was believed he was going for the *Times* or the *Standard*. Probably the general impression amongst his acquaintances was, that he was going out as a correspondent for the war that was impending in the East.

After waiting on the British Admiral, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, at Alexandria, he proceeded by sea to Jaffa, arriving there on July 9th; and thence by land to Gaza, on the confines of the desert. On July 15th he left Gaza to visit the Bedouin of the Desert of the Tîh: the details of this perilous journey are graphically told in a chapter of Mr. Walter Besant's memoir entitled "The Great Ride of the Sheik Abdullah." He arrived at Suez, which was still in the hands of the rebels, on August 1st, and got safely on board of a British man-of-war. Next day Suez was occupied by the British Forces, and Palmer was appointed Chief Interpreter to Admiral Sir William Hewett, V.C., Commanding the East Indian Squadron. In the meantime Captain Gill had received orders to pro-

ceed to Egypt, for duty under the Admiral. He reached Alexandria on July 27th, and Suez on August 5th.

It will probably occur as singular that Palmer's Expedition, as well as the subsequent Search-Expedition through the desert, should have been carried out under the direction of the Admiralty. This, however, will readily be understood when it is stated that until the middle of August the affairs of the Canal were entirely in the hands of the Admiralty; and, even after it was decided to approach Cairo from Ismailia, the British General took direction only of affairs west of the Canal, while those in the Canal, and in the desert to the east, as a necessity and convenience, remained in the hands of the Admiralty. This association of our work with the navy conduced considerably to rapidity of movement; and the hearty assistance which we received from all ranks of sailors with whom we came in contact, led, in no small degree, to any ultimate success obtained.

It may be necessary to give some slight account here of the careers of these two men, Palmer and Gill, the loss of whom was felt as a severe blow to both literature and travel ten years ago.

Professor Edward Henry Palmer was the first Oriental scholar of his day. His intellectual activity is evidenced by upwards of a score of books, the work of a similar number of years. The memoir of this remarkable man, the work of his friend, Mr. Walter Besant, is well known; and the many-sided-ness of his character and life made it a task of no small difficulty. I cannot do better than quote Mr. Besant's own words:—"Palmer was a scholar and student most earnest and resolute, yet always with the heart of a boy; so great a linguist that he stood alone, yet always modest; full of reliance in himself and his powers,

PROFESSOR E. H. PALMER.

yet never vainglorious; always at work, yet always with timé for leisure; the most serious man in the world when he had a purpose in view, yet the most delightful and the most mirthful of companions. It was decreed by fate that this great Oriental scholar was to become a friend of gipsies, a conjurer and magician, an intrepid explorer of unvisited deserts, a writer of leading articles, a translator of the New Testament, a mesmerist, and, among his friends, a *raconteur* of the first order. Finally, it was ordered for him that he should end his days after an exploit unparalleled, and in a manner strange, wonderful, and tragic; and that he should find a resting-place with England's heroes."

Captain William John Gill entered the Royal Engineers in 1864. Being a man of great energy and enterprise, with both the taste for travel and the means of gratifying it, he had gained considerable reputation as an explorer of the unknown districts of Central Asia. An account of his first voyage of exploration is given in the "Clouds in the East," by Colonel V. Baker, with whom Gill travelled in Persia in 1873. Three years later Gill started on his first journey to China. His aspirations were directed to a journey through North-West China to Kashgoria, and so to Europe: but this proving impracticable from the troubled aspect of affairs between England and Russia in 1878, he turned southwards, and passed through Tibet to the Irawadi River. The account of his journey was given to the world in 1880, in "The River of Golden Sand;" and the merits of the explorer were recognised by both the Geographical Societies of London and Paris with the presentation of their gold medal. Between 1880 and his embarkation for Egypt in 1882 Gill had not been idle. Turkey, Afghanistan, and Tripoli were the scenes of his

energetic devotion to his country's service; and returning from Tripoli *viâ* Constantinople, he was a few days later despatched on his last journey, to join the staff of the Expeditionary Force in Egypt.

On August 6th Gill and Palmer met together again, and considered their arrangements for re-entering the desert from Suez. There has been considerable discussion in public print as to the primary object of their proceeding to the desert, but three objects appear to have been certainly in view, viz.:—

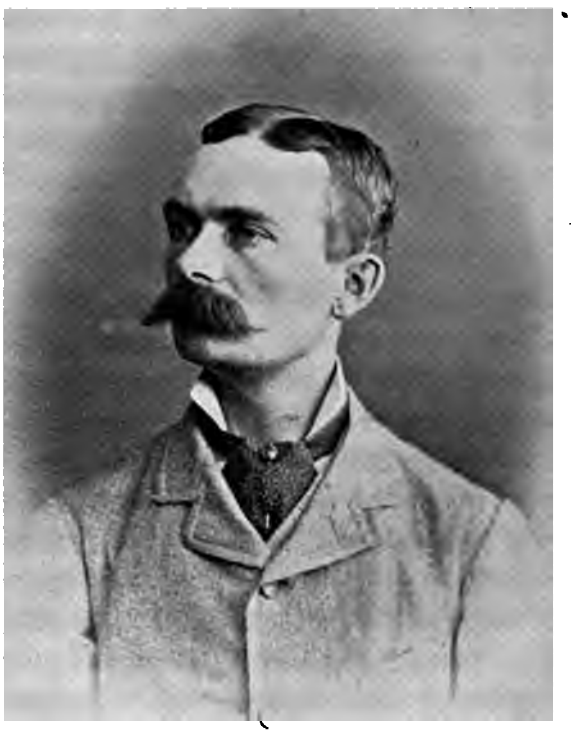
(1) Buying camels;

(2) Keeping the Bedouin available for transport and control of camels;

(3) Cutting the Syrian telegraph.

Gill and Palmer both state in their journals that their instructions were, to go into the desert to cut the telegraph wires, which, though they cross the Canal at El Kantâra, could not be cut there without infringing the neutrality of Suez Canal. The party were also to be at Nackl on August 12th to meet Sheik Misleh, Amîr of the Tîyahah; and it would appear from Gill's journal that after proceeding some way into the desert, probably as far as Nackl, Palmer was to remain there for a conference of sheiks, while Gill was to proceed north to cut the telegraph-wire. At Palmer's request, a naval officer (Lieutenant Harold Charrington, Flag-Lieutenant to Admiral Sir William Hewett) joined the party, and they started from Ayun Mûsa, a watering-place a few miles from Suez, on August 9th. They were accompanied by Gill's dragoman, Khalîl Atek (a Syrian Christian), Palmer's cook, Bokhor (a Jew), and two Bedouin, Metter Abu Sofîa, and his nephew, Salâmi Ibn Aid, of the Lehewât tribe, besides camel-men.

At the time of their departure the desert was sealed to



Captain W. J. Gill, R.E.

Europeans, and when they left Ayun Mûsa the party disappeared. On August 11th disquieting rumours reached Suez that the party had met with some accident; but as such rumours frequently accompany such expeditions, no credence was placed upon them. On August 23rd, no news of the party being yet forthcoming, the Admiralty telegraphed out: "If another officer is wanted to deal with Bedouin, Colonel Warren, R.E., is disposable. Shall he be sent out?" To which the Admiral replied:—"Should like Warren sent." Two days afterwards a rumour concerning the looting of Palmer's camp was telegraphed home; but it was then stated by the Admiral, Sir William Hewett, that he did not feel anxious for the safety of the party; and on the same day Admiral Hoskyns telegraphed the safe arrival at Suez of Gill—a piece of information which, unfortunately, was incorrect, but which caused it for some days to be generally supposed that Gill had returned from the desert in safety, and that the remainder of the party were safe with Metter Abu Sofîa.

The circumstances which led to the selection of Colonel Warren to head the Search-Expedition are set forth in some rough notes which will be found in Appendix A. A somewhat singular coincidence is therein set forth. On the night of August 10th, whilst Professor Palmer was being waylaid and taken prisoner by the Bedouin in the desert, Colonel Warren was busily engaged in his quarters at Chatham, dictating to me a report embodying certain proposals for dealings with the Bedouin; and therein set forth the prime necessity of guarding against treachery and assassination. The Bedoui, though courteous and hospitable, is strangely wanting in faithfulness where white people and Christians are concerned; but, although he will not scruple to rob and murder those whom he finds

in his power, yet he is very chary of doing either if his victims are capable of active, though maybe on the whole ineffectual, resistance. Thus, to be well-armed, and to be alert and able to use one's weapons with effect, goes far to render one secure from ill-treatment by the Bedouin. As this report was being written, Palmer, trusting all to his Bedoui guide, having fallen into an ambush, had dissuaded his companions from all attempt at resistance—resistance which might have at least resulted in the three Englishmen exacting summary penalty for the treachery shown them—and, trusting to his powers of pleading and argument to extricate them from their critical position, was placing the party unreservedly in the power of the hostile Bedouin.

On August 24th Colonel Warren received a telegram from the Admiralty, saying his services might be required at once at the seat of war. Arrangements were rapidly completed, and, drawing one companion from Chatham, another from Southampton, while a third was on his way to join him from Ireland, he left London next evening by the night-mail for Brindisi and the Suez Canal.

We arrived at Port Said on August 31st, and finding that our steamer was to remain there some days to coal, we landed, and put up at the Hotel des Bains. Here an extensive business was going on between the war-correspondents and natives, relative to the former proceeding to the "front" by the banks of the Suez Canal, which was the only road open; it being very uncertain to what extent these banks were exposed to marauders from among Arabi's fanatical adherents. Scarcely had we got our rooms at the hotel, and sat down to lunch, when, owing to the good offices of Sir Redvers Buller, we received a message from Captain Wilson, of H.M.S. *Hecla*, stating

LIEUTENANT H. CHARRINGTON, R.N.,
Flag-Lieutenant to Admiral Sir W. Hewett, V.C.

that he would take us at once direct to Ismailia. We promptly got our luggage on board, and, passing a large number of steamers waiting in the Canal, arrived at Ismailia in the evening of September 1st. Colonel Warren waited on the Admiral, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, and was forthwith placed in charge of an immediate mission to ascertain the fate of Professor Palmer and his party, and told that no expense would be spared for this object.

The following day we were engaged at Ismailia, and received from the Chief-of-the-Staff proclamations, to be issued amongst the Bedouin and Fellahin, as to the object of the military occupation. The action of Shalufi had just occurred, and stores were being hurried up from Ismailia to the front towards Tel el Kebîr.

On September 3rd we received orders to proceed to Suez by the first boat going down the Canal, and finding that a transport—the *Bancoora*—was just moving out, we followed her in a launch, and succeeded in reaching her in time to take our passage to Suez. Lake Timsah at this time presented a very unusual appearance, being crowded with vessels of all descriptions. There were numerous men-of-war engaged in the service of the maritime base of our army, and in the protection and conduct of the Canal; the transports which transferred the army from Alexandria to their new base of operations at Ismailia, were there, and, in addition, a fleet of white vessels which had brought the Indian contingent from the East. Altogether, the scene was of the busiest, and we could not but experience regret at leaving it for doubtful, and less hopeful, duties down the Red Sea.

On arrival at the Bitter Lakes in the evening we found all traffic stopped, by the grounding of the *Durham Castle* in the Canal, and we remained there all night.

Next day, there being no immediate prospect of moving on, we left our baggage in the *Bancoora*, and landed at a *gare*. Here we waited until the arrival of the little steamboat which carried the mails to and fro, and in which we secured a deck-passage to Suez. The country in the vicinity of the *gare* did not invite a close inspection, and, as we were then unaware of the proximity of the supposed crossing of the Israelites, over what was, at the time of the Exodus, the sea, we spent the time we had to wait there in the shade afforded by the *gare-keeper's* garden. The heat just now was excessive, and as we were in our heavy English uniforms, having had no time to get a proper outfit before leaving England, we felt it a good deal.

It was matter of hourly expectation that the steamers passing through the Canal at this time would be attacked by the Bedouin; and no doubt the soldiers in the crowded transports would have suffered from their fire, even if only a few rifles had been ranged along the Canal: but at this time nearly all the Bedoui tribes, except the Towâra, were gathered together at Mâhada, the nearest water to Ismailia, east of the Canal, and were there awaiting the expected defeat of the British troops by Arabi Pasha, ready to swoop down upon them and loot their belongings as soon as the opportunity occurred. This gathering of Bedouin was constantly asserted, by those who knew the country well, as numbering 50,000 men, but the true number could not have exceeded 10 per cent. of this, or 5000 men. It is indeed open to considerable doubt whether it would be possible, on account of the deficiency of water, to gather together 5000 Bedouin anywhere in Arabia Petræa, except, perhaps, at Gatié, and not even there without making such preparations for the development and service of the water-supply as the Bedouin by themselves were very unlikely

to attempt. However, whatever the number might have been, there was some little danger to the launches that patrolled the Canal and carried the mails, since they were completely dominated by the canal banks; and this helped to alleviate the otherwise tedious nature of the run down to Suez.

Soon after noon we were landed at the Suez harbour-works, ravenous with hunger, and found a small café, where we obtained some sardines, grapes, and bread. We had no notion where the troops or ships were, but by good luck hailed a boat which proved to belong to the flag-ship, and were taken on board. Finding that the Admiral was now staying on shore, at the naval hospital, some miles off, we made our way up there, and reported our arrival to him on September 4th, just twenty-six days after Palmer's party had left Suez on their ill-fated journey, and ten days after our leaving London.

We were received by the Admiral in the most hospitable manner, and were introduced by him to an Egyptian officer, Osman Bey Rafât, A.D.C. to the Khedive, who had been specially sent to Suez to assist in the search after Palmer's party; and Colonel Warren was informed that Osman Bey and he were to act as colleagues in the matter. It was then arranged that we should proceed to Tor, the port of Sinai, in H.M.S. *Cockatrice*, which was under orders to go there to take a present of grain and other food for the monks of Sinai, the latter being reported to be starving, owing to supplies being cut off by the war; and Colonel Warren was to try and obtain information about Professor Palmer, and open up communication with the Bedouin of the Sinaitic peninsula.

And now, before commencing our narrative in detail, it seems necessary to make some preliminary observations in order to explain the position of affairs.

The *Jihâd* was being proclaimed among the Moslems in all directions. Hostile Bedouin occupied the desert around Suez to the west of the Canal; while communication with the desert to the east had almost entirely ceased. The following letter from the Governor of Nackl to the Governor of Akabah, written on September 9th, will, from the extraordinary colour it throws over current events, give some idea of the position of affairs to the east of the Canal. "The English Christians attacked the Bedouin near Ismailia" (probably refers to action of Shalufi), "when they were much in need of water, and the Sweet-Water Canal was blocked, so that none could go down to Suez from Ismailia. Then at night the English attacked the Bedouin, who ran away and informed Arabi Pasha; so he came from Kafr Dowar with plenty of troops and attacked the enemy, and has taken all their guns and arms as gain to the Moslems. Many prisoners; Ismailia destroyed; and the Christians of that place are very excited and afraid."

At the time of Palmer's departure for Ayun Mûsa on August 9th, there were still some native Greek families belonging to Suez living there; for the East India fleet had but just arrived, the British troops had not entered the Canal, and the Eastern Bedouin had not, in the vicinity of Suez, shown the same hostility as had the Egyptian Bedouin. Thus when, on August 13th, one of Palmer's camel-men named Saad suddenly appeared, and stated that the baggage of his party had been looted, no particular alarm was felt, as the looting of the baggage of travellers in the desert might occur during the most profound peace. When, however, the acting-governor of Suez, Reschid Bey, acting under the instructions of Sir William Hewett, sent a party out to bring Saad into Suez, the Arabs at Ayun

Mûsa would not permit it: then, for the first time, the Greek families realised that there was something very wrong, and retreated hastily into Suez, leaving their native gardeners behind. In a few days the gardeners took refuge in Suez, stating that the houses at Ayun Mûsa had been broken into and pillaged, and the gardens looted. Such a proceeding is of very rare occurence among the Bedouin, and meant war; and on our arrival at Suez all communication with Ayun Mûsa was cut off, and any Bedouin living there were known to be hostile to the British.

On August 21st, Sir William Hewett, hearing that some news of Palmer's party might be obtained through the Greek Archbishop at Tor, ordered Captain Foote of H.M.S. *Ruby* to proceed there in the Indian Government steamer *Amberwitch*, accompanied by the Greek Consul for Suez, M. Metzakis, who was known to the Greek Archbishop. Captain Foote returned to Suez on August 31st, and reported as follows: "It would appear from a general summary of the information obtained that Mr. Palmer, in company with Sheik Abu Sofîa (Metter Sofîa) proceeded from Ayun Mûsa to the country of a tribe called Quidetto,* and then on to the country of a tribe called Karabinda,* the baggage following in the rear. On the day after leaving Ayun Mûsa, about midday, on reaching a sand-hill a large number of Bedouin appeared and presented their guns. Sheik Sofîa requested Mr. Palmer to get down from the dromedary he was riding and mount his, which was a better one, the sheik mounting the dromedary of Mr. Palmer, which had the money; there is another version of this report, and that is, that the sheik took Mr. Palmer on his dromedary, behind

* Probably these mean Haiwatât and Terebîn.

him. No information could be obtained as to the fate of the two officers, except that the son of Sheik Abu Motarka (of the tribe through whose district they were passing) is reported to have been wounded, but whether by one of the two officers accompanying Mr. Palmer no accurate information could be obtained, nor could it be ascertained what had become of the officers. M. Metzakis has arranged that information is to be obtained by Bedoui employés of the Greek church, and I believe that in six days something more definite will be forthcoming from Tor."

On September 1st, H.M.S. *Cockatrice* had arrived at Suez with Osman Bey Rafât on board, directed by the Khedive to assist in making inquiries. As he was a Syrian from Hebron, he could claim some acquaintance with the desert Bedouin, and it was expected that he would be able to give valuable assistance.

Telegrams had also been sent to Mr. Consul Moore of Jerusalem, telling him of the disappearance of the party, and asking him to get news from Sheik Misleh of the Tîyahah, whom Palmer had directed to meet him at Nackl. A reply had been received from Mr. Moore to the effect that Misleh had gone to Nackl, had waited there two days beyond the appointed time, till August 14th, but that Palmer had not appeared.

Thus all the information we were in possession of on our arrival was—that the baggage had been plundered; that Palmer had escaped with Metter Abu Sofia; and that Gill had probably left the party to cut the telegraph wires, and had returned in safety. Robberies have so often taken place in the desert, and murder of Europeans so seldom, that there was no reason for supposing that any foul play had occurred, and all the Arab stories went to show that the party had escaped unhurt.

It was commonly reported that the party on being plundered had escaped towards Sinai, and some confusion of names, with reference to the locality of the place of attack, confirmed this report. The party were attacked in Wadi Sadr, only about forty miles from Suez; but so little was known by the Suez people of their own neighbourhood, that this name was unknown to them, and it was assumed as a fact that the attack took place in Wadi Sidri, close to the Wadi Mukâteb, in the Sinaitic peninsula. This was a most unfortunate assumption, as it gave an entirely different complexion to the whole transaction, and threw the responsibility of the robbery on the Towâra, in whose territory Wadi Sidri is, whereas Wadi Sadr is in Terebîn and Haiwatât territory. On our arrival this transference of site was accepted by all as quite correct; and it was only after considerable research and investigation that we ascertained the fact of this initial error in the supposed circumstances of the case.

The state of Suez at this time was indescribable; the Arab population almost to a man sided with Arabi Pasha against the English; but yet they feared the Bedouin. The most extraordinary ignorance existed about the state of affairs at Ismailia; and the air was filled with the shadows of panics relative to the town being attacked and sacked by hordes of Bedouin—all perfectly absurd in the face of the ample precautions taken by Sir William Hewett. The Europeans were expecting every day to hear of the great battle which was to wipe out the Egyptian Army; while the Moslems were expecting to hear of the British being swept into Lake Timsah. Grave reports were being spread about the state of our troops—that they were incapable of standing the heat; that they were dying of fever and in a state of mutiny; that they could not possibly stand the

prolonged strain—all ridiculous nonsense, as there was nothing that British troops had not vigorously passed through, campaign after campaign, in former years.

The timely seizure of the Sweet-Water Canal by Sir Garnet Wolseley, and the repair of the cut made in it by Arabi Pasha near Nifichi, had been effected; but, nevertheless, the water in the Sweet-Water Canal was gradually falling lower and lower, and a great alarm of impending water-famine was paralysing the people at Suez. In former days the town had been dependent for its water upon the springs at Ayun Mûsa; but that supply was now insufficient for the wants of the modern town, and it was also in the hands of the Bedouin. After the occupation of the town by the Admiral, the happy idea had occurred of filling one of the dry docks with fresh water; this was carried out most successfully by Captain Foote, thus giving Suez a chance for a few days, should the Sweet-Water Canal run dry.

Colonel Warren received authority from the Admiral to make the necessary arrangements for effecting an entry into the desert at Tor, and our time for preparation being very limited, we had to make great haste. We visited the British Consul, Mr. West, who had had forty years' experience at Suez, and was looked up to as an authority by all around. From his position he would necessarily have the closest connection with our work, and, moreover, he was to accompany us to Tor. The ready assistance he gave us at all times greatly helped us in the conduct of our inquiries, and much conduced to the success of the expedition. Our baggage having arrived with the *Bancoora*, and been deposited at the Docks, three miles away from Suez, we appealed to Mr. West for assistance to get it up to the Suez Hotel. This, in ordinary times, may be a matter of great ease, but at that time, everything being

topsy-turvy, it was no small matter to find means for doing anything out of the ordinary course; and it took half the day to get camels and load them, and to bring the luggage a distance of three miles.

Our time for preparation before leaving for Tor only amounted to a few hours; and we had not only to supplement our deficient kit by curious garments which we obtained in the native bazaar, but we had also to obtain servants and an interpreter. Everyone worth his salt had already been taken into Government service; and, after much trouble, the services of one Hassan were engaged, for five shillings per diem, as servant. This man had acted as a kind of tourists' guide in Suez, and knew a few words of a great many languages; he probably had never done a real day's work in his life, and was neither ornamental nor useful. We also engaged one, Del Borgo, as interpreter; he was a very decent fellow in his own line, but talked very imperfect English, and was not over bright.

We visited the Greek families which had come in from Ayun Mûsa, getting very little further information from them, except the impression that Metter Abu Sofîa, Palmer's guide, was implicated in the attack on him; but as they called him Metter Nassâr it was supposed they meant Mûsa Nusîer of the Towâra. The confusion was still further increased by the fact that Palmer called Metter Sofîa by the name Umtunjar. We also made the acquaintance of a Persian merchant, named Ossad, who gave us information which proved of importance subsequently. He said that Mûsa Nusîer, head-sheik of the Towâra of Sinai, had got frightened on receiving the letter from the Governor of Suez relative to the disappearance of Professor Palmer, and had left the vicinity of Tor, fearing that he would be taken prisoner and punished. According to this

man, the Bedouin had been instigated by Arabi Pasha's party against the Christians, quite independent of the attack on Professor Palmer; and subsequent evidence indicated that Mûsa Nusîer received a letter from the Governor of El Arîsh, directing him to massacre the Christians; but he had refused to act on it.

Among other inquiries, we visited the prison and interrogated two Arabs who had been captured at the action of Shalufi. Colonel Warren wanted to give them their liberty and let them take letters to the tribes in the desert; but, strange to say, they would not take their liberty on such terms; and said they would rather die at once, for they would be sure to be killed by the Bedouin if they went among them on such an errand. This showed a very curious and unusual state of affairs in the desert. They said they were from near El Arîsh, and belonged to a Sheik Agag's tribe; but we could not ascertain who they really were, and the odd part of the matter was that Osman Bey, who was brought up at Hebron, and ought to have known something about the tribes towards Syria, could not be certain to what tribe they belonged.

CHAPTER II.

VOYAGE IN H.M.S. "COCKATRICE." ARRIVAL AT TOR. INFORMATION RECEIVED. LETTER TO PALMER. DIFFICULTIES OF DIVIDED AUTHORITY. DEPARTURE OF OSMAN BEY RAFÂT AND THE GREEK CONSUL. AT TOR IN THE ABSENCE OF THE "COCKATRICE." ARRIVAL OF LIEUTENANT BURTON. NEWS OF ARABI'S COLLAPSE. COYNESS OF MÛSA NUSÎEB. STANDING-CAMP IN THE DESERT. MR. WEST LEAVES FOR SUEZ. WAITING FOR MÛSA. RETURN TO TOR. RESULTS OF OUR MISSION TO TOR.

ON Wednesday, September 6th, H.M.S. *Cockatrice* was to be ready to proceed to Tor in the afternoon; but, our party being unable to get together in time, her departure was postponed until the evening. She was burdened with about two tons of wheat and biscuits bought in the town, with thirty sacks of wheat supplied by the commissariat, and fifty sacks of beans shipped by the Governor—stores which were to be handed over to the Greek Archbishop at Tor, for the use of the monks of the convent of Mount Sinai. Before starting Captain Foote came on board and had a talk with Colonel Warren, putting him in possession of all the information he had gathered on the subject of the missing party.

We left Suez at 7.30 p.m., under Captain Grenfell's charge, our party consisting of Colonel Warren, Mr. West (English Consul), M. Metzakis (Greek Consul), Osman Bey Rafât, myself, and Quartermaster-Sergeant Kennedy, R.E. We also took Del Burgo, our interpreter, and our lazy Arab servant, Hassan.

The *Cockatrice* is a little paddle-wheel gunboat, well known on the Danube; she had been brought over to Egypt on account of her light draught and general handiness. Our party was rather large for the limited accommodation of a ship-of-war of her tiny dimensions; but

H.M.S. "COCKATRICE."

Captain Grenfell was equal to the occasion, gave us a capital dinner, and fitted us all out with sleeping accommodation. A strong, but very warm breeze was blowing, and we chatted away until deep into the night, our medium for conversation being French.

Those who were fond of observing Nature were up before sunrise next morning, anxious to see the coast of Sinai. At first we could only see leaden-coloured clouds, with the white-flecked bubbling sea around; but as morning broke a most glorious view opened upon us. The rosy clouds gradually diminished and disappeared, and the red, castellated mountains of the peninsula, cut and crannied by innumerable fissures, stood boldly out in the clear azure sky; while all around us, and reaching apparently to the foot of the mountains, stretched a seething mass of waters, intensely blue, and broken up by lines of white sea-horses, racing along under the freshening breeze.

The pleasant gurgling sounds made by the paddle-wheels on the water, and the spray sprinkled amid the heated air, suggested a coolness and enjoyment to our senses after the oppressive heat of a September night in the Red Sea.

About noon we neared the shore sufficiently to see that there was a flat plain stretching far inland between the coast and the foot of the mountains, and soon grove after grove of palm-trees appeared in view. At the edge of the water the little town of Tor was seen, a few well-built stone houses standing out in spotless white and dazzling brightness against yellow plains and deep, green palm-groves. Three flags floated lazily over the town—the Egyptian, the Custom House, and the Sanitary.

The harbour of Tor is guarded by a coral-reef, through the entrance of which we carefully picked our way to an anchorage. Our appearance evidently put the whole population into commotion; and it was clear that many a one deemed his presence undesirable, for we saw camels and donkeys moving hastily away. These, it turned out, belonged to Bedouin, who had come in from the desert to bully the inhabitants, and levy black-mail of dates from the luxuriant groves around. Since Captain Foote had left in the *Amberwitch* they had been threatening to sack the town, and had led the inhabitants an anxious time, until our unexpected arrival; for, though the Towâra as a tribe are mild compared to other Bedouin, they can be truculent among townsfolk, and there was a strong war-party among them, whose passions were fanned by emissaries of Arabi, sent by the Haiwatât sheiks at Cairo.

It was amusing to find, however, that amid all the bustle and disturbance the quarantine official came off as usual to demand our bill of health, as though all the details of Egyptian routine were still in full operation. Needless

to remark that all formalities were quietly attended to, and we got leave from the official to land, though it is doubtful whether the quarantine regulations would have been allowed to interfere with our intentions in that respect.

All Tor was now on the beach, eager to know our errand. The townspeople were glad to see us, looking upon us as deliverers, and yet somewhat afraid to assist us openly, for fear of our sudden departure leaving them again to the merciless Bedoui freebooters. As we approached in the steam-launch the people collected in groups near the landing-place; then some, rushing into the water, carried us triumphantly to land on their shoulders.

The town of Tor consists of a few well-built mansions and a collection of mud huts, sheltering a population of two hundred to three hundred persons; this was, at the time of our visit, augmented by some fifty fugitives from Suez. The garrison consisted of a Governor, of the rank of *boulak-bashi* (sergeant-major), and four soldiers. These received us with becoming dignity, and escorted us to the convent establishment, where the Greek Archbishop was staying. The convent building at Tor is merely a depôt for stores, the real convent being at Mount Sinai. It is a two-storeyed dwelling, with a flat roof, and a wooden balcony to the upper floor. There is a large court-yard in rear, with small dwellings for the inferior monks; the whole *entourage* being eminently defensible, even with the few men we could put into it.

We were conducted into the reception room, a large and barely-furnished room, where we were received by the Archbishop, white headed, humble, and venerable. He was clothed in white from head to foot, with black adjuncts, and the usual head-dress. He had a picture on

the wall of a former Patriarch of Jerusalem, an old friend of Colonel Warren's, and this put us on good terms at once. Very pleased was he to hear of the seasonable present sent to him by Sir William Hewett, and he commented upon the goodness of the British nation, and foretold all success.

The convent of Sinai is in the habit of giving *bakshîsh* to the Bedouin in the shape of bread and other food, and now that all supplies were cut off the Bedouin were getting clamorous; and finding they could frighten and alarm the monks by bluster, they had used their power with much effect, and had greatly reduced the convent stores. The monks, at the time of our arrival, were in a state of despondency, brooding over the two evils that appeared to stare them in the face—on the one hand, starvation, and on the other, the sacking of the convent and massacre of its inhabitants. Under ordinary circumstances they would have felt that their lives would be spared, for the Towâra Bedouin know full well the annual value to them of the convent in their midst. But there was a mysterious influence abroad, the effect of which could not be truly estimated. There were strangers in the Towâra camp who had stigmatised the head-sheik, Mûsa Nusîer, as a traitor to the Moslem faith, and advocated a *Jihâd* and its concomitant, the massacre of all Christians.

On hearing that we intended stopping a short time at Tor, the Archbishop at once offered all the rooms in the house, except his own, an offer we were very glad to accept for we were anxious to get intimate with the people at once. We were put into possession of our rooms, including a kitchen, with an old monk as cook attached to it—a most worthy old gentleman, and a really good cook. Captain Grenfell brought us food from on board ship.

The monks had little news to offer us, but a feeling

prevailed that the party we were in search of had been attacked and made prisoners, and were still alive. Our first effort was to get into communication with the Bedouin, from whom alone we could get reliable information, and for this purpose we went to see Ali Effendi, the Governor of Tor. He was a man with little mind or enterprise, and had no knowledge of anything beyond the most limited idea of his duty. He entered into long accounts of the dangers which he, as a loyalist, had run from the Bedouin, after the departure of the *Amberwitch*; but, he said, he was quite at our disposal, pointing out very truly, however, that as a government official he was not a *persona grata* to the Bedouin, and suggesting that any overtures should be made through the principal Christian merchants, MM. Kostandi and Hannîn.

The information we obtained was to the following effect. On the evening of August 11th, Palmer's party was molested by twelve men of the Haiwatât tribe, and subsequently fell into an ambuscade, when one of the party fired his revolver and wounded a Bedoui. Subsequently the party, consisting of Palmer, Charrington and Gill, surrendered. Metter Sofîa, their guide, escaped with the money that Palmer had taken with him to buy camels. The party was carried captive into Syria, and the Bedouin threatened that they would give them over to Arabi's party if they were not ransomed. Metter offered £10 each as a ransom, and increased it to £30, but ceased further bargaining, doubting the good faith of the captors. There was a further report that the Bedouin had stripped the party of the clothes they had on, and left them no protection against the sun.

The Greek Consul made a good deal of mystery over the evidence of the Greeks, and there was no little diffi-

culty in getting it properly sifted. The account, too, was so much in keeping with those of former years, relating to other travellers who had been robbed and left to find their way back in a state of nudity, that it was quite probable that the story might be altogether a surmise and nothing more; and at Colonel Warren's request M. Metzakis wrote a letter to the convent of Mount Sinai, asking if the stories told could be supported by any independent witnesses from among the Bedouin. MM. Kostandi and Hannîn impressed upon us the fact that the Bedouin were angry at the attempt Captain Foote had made to communicate with them; and after he had left they had in consequence come down and threatened to sack the town. At their suggestion Colonel Warren arranged to send a letter to a Bedoui petty sheik, Sala by name, who was said to be about four miles off. The letter was duly despatched, and early next morning the bearer returned with a message from Sala to the effect that he could not read, and wished some one to go out and read the letter to him, stipulating, however, that it must not be a European of importance, because if he met such a European he would be treated as a spy by his brother Bedouin. Accordingly, Del Burgo went, and saw Sheik Sala and some Bedouin near the date-palms to the south of Tor; he gave him £2 to take a letter to Mûsa Nusîer, and bring back an answer in four days, after which these Bedouin disappeared for good, and we received no reply.

DEL BURGO, INTERPRETER.

During the day a Greek priest informed Mr. West confidentially that there was a man near Tor called Rascheidi, half-Bedoui, half-Fellah, who had formerly been a servant of Palmer's, and who was keeping several camels left by him in 1870. This man was reported to have heard that Palmer was prisoner in a *wadi* called Sidri, and from his affection towards his old master he had gone off in order to assist him; but he had turned back on hearing either that Palmer was dead, or that it was not Palmer that was a prisoner. A friend of Rascheidi, called Farrak, was introduced to Mr. West (who was thoroughly convinced that Palmer and his party were alive), and Farrak expressed his willingness to take a letter to Palmer if Rascheidi would go with him. This was all a very confidential and mysterious affair, conducted at Farrak's request by Mr. West, and there was no opportunity for cross-examination; but eventually Colonel Warren was allowed to see Farrak, and a letter was written to Palmer and entrusted to him. The letter ran as follows:—

FARRAK.

Tor, Sept. 9th, 1882.
Saturday.

MY DEAR PALMER,

I am here with English Consul (Mr. West), looking out for you; send word by the bearer, Aid Rascheidi, your old servant, how we can best assist you in getting back.

We hear you are in Wadi Sidri, but have not quite learnt the exact place. We have succeeded in sending a letter to Abu Nusier, chief of Towâra, whom I have asked to take me to Nackl in search of you, and expect him in four days; in meantime other means may present themselves to us. Let me know the best plan to secure your safety and that of your party, and money will be

forthcoming. Keep up your spirits! we will act as quickly as we can consistent with securing your safety. We only learnt to-day of your location in safety.

I enclose paper and pencil for reply. The Admiral is making all efforts for your recovery.

Your old friend,

CHARLES WARREN.

N.B.—Communication with the Bedouin is at present closed to Europeans at all points, but we have opened it up from here for the present. I will telegraph home news of your safety as soon as I get your reply.

The Canal is occupied by the British, and our troops are half-way to Cairo, with success in all engagements, but Arabi's party at El Arish is strong with the Bedouin.

If you cannot send a written reply send a token that you are well, one for each, a piece of cloth or string with three knots in it (one for each), or some hair from your head or beard with three knots in it; otherwise we cannot tell that the messenger has seen you and we may lose time.

Grave discussion arose as to whether Farrak should be left the discretion of attempting to rescue Palmer and party without first obtaining their consent; and Colonel Warren had a difficult task in pressing and obtaining concurrence in his view, that this might cause their murder, and that it must on no account be attempted without Palmer's consent.

With the letter was sent a pencil, paper, and a bottle of zinc ointment for wounds and sores. At last £10 was paid in advance to Farrak, and he left about 8 P.M. to sleep at the palm-trees, outside the town, and start on his errand early in the morning.

It is to be noted that there were two curious errors in this matter, due most probably to a want of systematic cross-examination. In the first place, Rascheidi never had been Palmer's servant, and knew nothing about him. He had been the servant of Mr. Wilfred Blunt, and the camels in his charge belonged to Mr. Blunt. In the second place, we were still under the impression that the capture of the party took place in Wadi Sidri, which

is not far from Tor, in the Sinaitic peninsula, instead of in Wadi Sadr, forty miles from Suez. We were, therefore, under the impression that the attack had taken place in Mûsa Nusîer's territory, in which case it seemed almost certain that no great violence would have occurred; for the Towâra were not openly at war with us, whereas the Haiwatât, of Wadi Sadr, were a portion of the tribes fighting for Arabi.

This incident brought home to us very forcibly the difficult position we were in owing to our want of cohesion. There was first the Greek Consul, who obtained information from the Greeks, and took his own view of the situation; then there was Osman Bey Rafât, in full uniform of a Colonel in the Egyptian Army, A.D.C. to the Khedive, who, as Colonel Warren's colleague, naturally wished to be consulted in every step taken; and there was Mr. West, British Consul, who, from his position, entered into separate confidential communications with the Arabs. It took all one day to arrange matters with Farrak; and it was quite evident that with no one empowered to give a casting vote, or to control operations, we were but courting failure.

On September 10th, the Archimandrite, or Treasurer of the Convent, arrived from Mount Sinai. His information did not differ substantially from the other, except that he thought that Palmer and his companions were dead; but the reason he gave was that the Bedouin had seen vultures hovering over the place where the attack was made, and as this would have been the case if a camel had been killed, or had died there, it did not seem to be of much weight. He had, however, one very important piece of news, viz., that Mûsa Nusîer had received a letter from Arabi, urging an indiscriminate massacre of Christians;

but Mûsa, who wished to be friendly to the monks, had buried the letter in the sand, so that no one should see it. This might be purely an allegory, but it was important as showing a determination on Mûsa Nusîer's part to preserve an attitude of neutrality during the war.

It was now evident that we should not be able to accomplish anything with so large a company; and as Osman Bey Rafât conjectured that the party were not in the desert at all, but had been carried as prisoners to Cairo, Colonel Warren proposed that he and the Greek Consul should undertake that part of the inquiry, while we went inland to the place of the attack. Having secured their assent, Captain Grenfell was asked when he could get ready for sea, and replied he would be off at six o'clock in the evening. We were accordingly soon busy with despatches to the Admiral, giving an account of what had transpired, and proposing to move inland under the care of Mûsa Nusîer, as soon as he should send us the necessary provisions for the journey; the party to consist of Colonel Warren, Lieutenant Burton, R.E. (whom we expected to join us on the return of the *Cockatrice*), myself, Quarter-master-Serjeant Kennedy, and Del Burgo. It was proposed to go from Tor overland to Wadi Ghurundel on the sea coast, and to open up communication there with Captain Grenfell in the *Cockatrice*, there being an anchorage in that vicinity. With our departure from Tor on our expedition, it was arranged that Mr. West should return to Suez, where his presence was of great importance.

As there was some danger that the Bedouin might attack Tor during the absence of the *Cockatrice*, especially for the sake of the grain still stowed away in the convent yard, Captain Grenfell left us a corporal and three marines to assist in the defence. We were thus enabled to keep

two sentries on each night, a marine downstairs, and Colonel Warren, myself, or Kennedy on the roof. Our first night after the departure of the *Cockatrice* did not pass without an alarm, for some friendly Bedouin arrived to transport part of the grain to Mount Sinai; and coming silently through the darkness, we had little warning of their proximity till we were attracted by the grunts and groans of the camels in the act of kneeling on the pavement below the balcony, and they nearly met with a warm reception.

During our isolation there were frequent alarms of an impending attack by the Bedouin, and we had to look to our defences. With eight rifles and plenty of ammunition, we felt quite prepared to stand a siege; and the little arrangements we made for defence did not injure the house, and made us feel practically safe from being rushed.

Being now by ourselves we could get more accurate information from the inhabitants, who had been in horrible fright of the Bey in full uniform; as for ourselves, we were in the fullest of desert costume, having put away our uniform on landing. As far as we could ascertain, the orders from Arabi that reached the Bedouin came from the fanatical governor of El Arîsh by way of Nackl; and they were couched in such a form that they seemed to be the orders of a prophet rather than those of a military commander. It was the same old story that has repeated itself again and again in the history of Islam, and has been the cause of outbreak after outbreak of ill-requited faith and fanaticism. The Bedouin firmly believed Arabi to be the prophet Isa (Jesus) foretold in the Koran, and who is to come and raise the Moslems to their proper place as the dominant power of the world. Arabi was credited with the power of working miracles, and was supposed to

possess two familiar spirits, or angels, resting one on each shoulder; one told him of what was going on in the present, and the other foretold the future. He was supposed already to have vanquished the British in every contest, and was only staying his hand before entirely destroying them.

Colonel Warren had a long interview with the Archimandrite, who said Mûsa Nusîer had given his word that the Christians should not be molested so long as the Bedouin had enough food to eat; but should they become hungry, he might not be able to prevent them attacking Tor in search of food, their powers of bartering being cut off, as they were afraid to enter Suez. To meet this, Colonel Warren proposed to establish a depôt at Tor where the Bedouin might exchange their produce for corn, and to this the merchants quite agreed; but the Archimandrite said it was impossible, and, of course, it would have greatly reduced the patronage of the Greek convent, which practically monopolises this trade.

The Archimandrite also told us that when the *Amberwitch* first came in with Captain Foote, a rumour was spread about that the English were about to land five hundred men to attack the Bedouin, who thereupon proceeded to fortify two mountain passes leading into the interior; since then they had calmed down, but they were still uncertain what to do in consequence of the stringent orders they received from Arabi Pasha. This information was interesting in connection with a letter written by the Governor of Nackl to the Governor of Akabah, and which we subsequently obtained on visiting the latter place. The letter mentioned the same number, five hundred men, as having landed at Tor; and the correspondence of these two items of information gives some adequate idea of the

accuracy with which such rumours are handed about from one to another in the desert.

Our life at Tor was not of a very enjoyable kind. The days were so hot that we could not take any outdoor exercise except in the morning and evening, when the sun was close to the horizon. We got up every day at dawn to get a bath in the sea before sunrise. However, a shark showing himself close to shore one morning, we had to bathe afterwards inside the rocks in about eighteen inches of water. During the day we interviewed various people, and wrote diaries or reports; and in the evening we got out again for a short time, and, there being a pleasant sea-breeze, we were able to get up an appetite for the dinner which the excellent old monk cooked for us, and to which we were enabled to do full justice.

The townspeople were in a chronic state of alarm lest the Bedouin should carry out their threats and attack the town, and during the absence of the *Cockatrice* there was always someone to warn us of impending attack. On the evening of September 12th, the Archimandrite was the alarmist, and came to us with a very grave countenance. He stated that he had been over to the date-palms, and had heard that an attack might be made by the Bedouin that night. Also that another message had been received from Arabi ordering the immediate massacre of all Christians, and that the tribes had assembled in Wadi Feirân to consider their course of action, Mûsa Nusîer being still unwilling to comply. During the night we kept a sharp look out, but were not molested. The night was unusually hot, and I well remember my four hours on sentry-go on the roof; on my beat lay the prostrate form of the venerable Archbishop, fast asleep, and it was necessary to step over him at every turn. Colonel Warren had

arranged that, at the first signal of attack, all the inhabitants should assemble in our yard, with any weapons they could collect, and we would defend them as best we could with our rifles. Our arrangements, however, were never put to the test.

Early in the morning a letter was received from the monks at Mount Sinai stating that news had arrived from Mûsa Nusîer, to the effect that the Governor of Nackl had sent word that there was no occasion to inquire any further about Professor Palmer and his party, as he (the Governor) had killed them with his own hand. To us this message appeared an answer to our inquiries, which had been concocted by Mûsa Nusîer, to clear the Bedouin of responsibility in the matter, and throw all blame elsewhere. But we learnt afterwards that the Governor of Nackl, although he did not actually kill Palmer and his companions with his own hand, was fanatic enough, and confident in Arabi to such an extent as, to lay claim to having done so.

That morning the *Cockatrice* returned from Suez, bringing Lieutenant Burton, R.E., provisions for our journey inland, and letters from the Admiral approving what had been done. Some Press telegrams were also received (from Bombay to Suez), stating that Arabi had been declared by the Sultan a rebel; that he was buying swift dromedaries to escape across the Libyan desert; and that 6000 Turkish troops had landed at Port Said.

This news was not of a very authentic character, as we now know, and was opposed by the apparent inaction of our army before Tel el Kebîr. We could hear of no important change in the position of the troops since we passed through Ismailia. The army at Alexandria, and that at Ismailia, were both still confronted by entrench-

ments bristling with rifles and cannon; and while the enemy could sit quietly on the defensive, conscious that they must be attacked before we could score a move in the game, our men exposed to the excessive heat of the Egyptian autumn felt the shadow of sickness working amongst them, whilst they lacked the stimulative power of rapid forward movement. The advent of the Turkish troops we could only view with suspicion—certainly they would weaken rather than strengthen the Expeditionary Forces; and, although come presumably as our friends, their arrival would revive the failing courage of the true believers in their struggle against the Christians. One retrograde step by our forces, we knew, would largely augment the rebels' power, and convert all the Bedouin of the desert into our active opponents; and for ourselves we felt that now our efforts must be redoubled to obtain access to that information which a slight delay might remove from us far into futurity. From the news Burton brought us it seemed clear that there were still great hopes of Palmer being alive. Raoulf Pasha, the Governor of Suez, had told him that a Bedoui had come in from the desert, and stated that Palmer and his party were still alive, and near Marbook. Our latest communication from Mount Sinai also tended to confirm the supposition that the party were alive.

On receipt of this news we visited MM. Kostandi and Hannîn to acquaint them of its purport, and asked what would be the effect of the news upon the Bedouin; their reply, "God only knows," was not helpful. On asking them what would happen when we went inland, and the *Cockatrice* left, they said that the Bedouin would be sure to come and sack the place, and that the inhabitants would not attempt to fight, but would try to get away, either by

boats or by camels. To reassure them Colonel Warren proposed to take one hunded Towâra Bedouin into pay as a guard to Tor, paying them every day with the food we had brought for the convent, and giving a bond to the convent that the money to repay them would be forthcoming. This they seemed delighted at.

As there were no tidings of Sheik Sala, who had taken the letter to Mûsa Nusîer, Colonel Warren settled to write again to Mûsa, telling him of the news from Suez, and warning him to keep peace in the peninsula. He also requested him to supply, as a guard for Tor, one hundred Bedouin, who would be paid by the British Government. Having agreed with Mr. West as to the precise terms of the letter, the question arose how we were to send it. This was settled by the entry of Ali Effendi, the Governor, who proposed to go and see Mûsa Nusîer himself, and bring him in by persuasion. Colonel Warren agreed to act as Governor of Tor during his absence, and the garrison, four *zaptiehs*—Osman, Ali, Yusuf and another—sturdy fellows, thoroughly able to deal with the whole population of Tor, and impress them with the might of the government, were summoned and duly handed over. Ali Effendi said that the Arabs would never believe that the Sultan had gone against Arabi. Everybody knew that the Sultan had conferred the Grand Cordon of the Mejidie on Arabi; and it was believed that he had also given him a sword with which to slay the Christians. In fact, the Arabs all looked upon Arabi as the Sultan's mouth-piece, and considered that his orders came direct from Stamboul. The Governor showed great trepidation as the time came for him to start; but eventually he was packed off to the palm-groves outside Tor, whence he was to start early next morning for Mûsa Nusîer.

The duties of Colonel Warren as acting-governor of Tor were not very irksome, but resulted in one thing, that the *zaptiehs* were a good deal more alert after the departure of the Effendi, and they certainly learnt to pay proper salaams to British officers when they met them.

On September 16th, Farrak returned with the mysterious Rascheidi and Ooud, another Bedoui messenger of ours. Rascheidi asked to see Mr. West privately, and said that as he was Mr. Blunt's servant, he could not go with Farrak to find Palmer unless he were guaranteed that Mr. Blunt would not require him. He proposed to go back to his tents to avoid suspicions, and then start in eight or ten days' time, as though he were about to trade in Syria. Colonel Warren came to an arrangement with Rascheidi, and he left with the letter for Palmer.

During the day the steamship *Dragon* arrived from Suez. Captain Hulton was in command, and he at once came ashore with despatches from the Admiral, to the effect that Arabi had surrendered and Cairo was in our hands (September 13th and 14th). In accordance with the wishes of the Admiral, Colonel Warren assembled the people together in a court-yard, and, as Governor of Tor, read out the proclamation of peace, and called for three cheers for the Khedive. The proclamation caused some stir, but the people had been too long under Eastern methods of government to credit a word about Arabi's surrender; their faith in him was too strong. A copy of the proclamation was sent off after Ali Effendi to Wadi Feirân; and he was told to *order* Mûsa Nusîer to send twelve camels in at once, to take us inland. Another copy was sent by Ooud to the Governor of Nackl, and Colonel Warren also wrote directing the latter to send his submission at once to the Governor of Suez. However,

it afterwards transpired that Ooud was too wide awake to allow himself near the Governor of Nackl on such an errand, and he was providentially robbed on the way.

That night we had a great feast at the convent in honour of the great triumph of our army; Captain Grenfell brought up choice supplies from the ship, and invited several of the old monks to join our party and test his champagne. They pronounced it excellent, but still not as good as *araki*, the fire-water of the country. No doubt the monks had had some jolly times before in the same rooms, and they were not at all loth to be merry. One old fellow, Neoficus, the butcher, was a great friend of ours, and prided himself upon his strength. During the evening he challenged any of us to a trial of strength, and, Captain Grenfell acting as our champion, the combatants seated themselves opposite each other at a corner of the table, and resting their right elbows on the table and clasping hands each tried to press down his opponent's hand till the back of it touched the table. The champions were very equally matched, both being powerfully built men, and after extraordinary efforts on both sides the contest was declared to be drawn.

Colonel Warren having decided to start on our inland journey, we were busy next day arranging for transport. We found there were no camels at all to be hired, and were reduced to donkeys. It was a matter of nice calculation how many donkeys we should require to get from Tor across the plain to the first water at Wadi Feirân; but do what we could it was quite evident that the supply of donkeys available could not carry our tents and boxes, so Colonel Warren settled to go and camp about four miles outside Tor, at some gardens belonging to the townspeople; and, as we could not go to the Bedouin, try and entice the

Bedouin to come to us. All the donkeys in the place were paraded, but only thirty could be mustered; these were ordered to be ready for the following morning, and we packed up our stores ready for starting.

At sunrise, on September 18th, we sent off six donkeys loaded with our stores for the gardens, following with the second cavalcade later in the morning. Arrived at the site of our encampment, we pitched our tents and arranged our belongings. The heat was very excessive, and the mosquitoes punished us severely; we were very glad, therefore, when the sun set, and made existence a little more tolerable. We found, however, that all manner of insects swarmed in our tent, for we had been foolish enough to light our lanterns inside, and the glimmer brought them on us in myriads.

Mr. West having returned to the *Cockatrice* with the marines, our fighting strength was now reduced to four, besides Del Burgo, our interpreter. Hassan, our cook and servant, had been left behind at Tor, as he was nearly mad with fright; and on the morning before our departure had come up with tears in his eyes and begged to be allowed to remain where he was, for he knew we should all be killed if we persisted in going. To supply his place we took an Arab named Sala, who had cooked for some tourists, and had learnt cleanliness to the extent of washing his hands before kneading the flour for bread. For an Arab, Sala was a marvel of a cook, being able to make soup, a stew, boil a tin of preserved vegetables, and even turn it out, besides boasting of many accomplishments which he had no opportunity with us of exhibiting. We all helped him in his work, and under the superintendence of Colonel Warren, who was quite the *chef*, we all soon bid fair to become experts. Each day while we stayed

here Captain Grenfell, Mr. West, and some other officers of the *Cockatrice* rode over from Tor to see us, and we endeavoured to lay before them a repast of which they could partake. The *menu* generally ran to omelette and preserved vegetables; meat was not good in such hot weather, and the one sheep we killed was so tough that we were obliged to dry it in the sun and make *biltong* of it, as is done in South Africa. In this way we obtained a supply which lasted a considerable time, the more so as a taste for this form of food is acquired only after prolonged short diet. Our drink was oatmeal and water, commonly called "hogs' wash," a very inoffensive drink for hot weather; it was kept in a large wooden half-barrel, and was much patronised.

During the day we had to keep a constant look-out to prevent the possibility of the camp being rushed by the Bedouin, and at night one of the four kept guard with his rifle ready throughout the darkness. It may be asked why we had left our comfortable quarters at the convent, and come out to camp in the desert. It was to reassure the Bedouin; to show them that we did not meditate treachery, and had confidence in them. The reason hitherto assigned for the non-appearance of Mûsa Nusîer and his men, after our repeated overtures to them, was that they were afraid —afraid that we were only waiting under the guns of our ship, armed to the teeth, to take them prisoners, and throw them into chains to answer for the sins of others. Their reasoning in this respect was far from being unnatural, for we have met many Englishmen, ignorant indeed of the tribal system, who expressed their opinion that it did not matter what Bedouin were hanged so long as an example was made; whereas it is essential, for the punishment of such people to be of any use, that the right persons are

punished. In our case, however, we had not thought at that time of punishment, we were merely working for the liberation of Palmer's party, and we thought that by thus going alone into the desert, and placing ourselves in their power, we would disarm the Bedouin of their fears. We hoped thus to influence them by showing our confidence in

CAMP NEAR TOR.

them generally as a tribe; but we were always on the alert in case of an attack by some enthusiastic Moslem who might try to rush our camp.

In the afternoon of September 19th, Ali Effendi arrived on his camel from Wadi Feirân. He stated that he had read Colonel Warren's letter to Mûsa Nusîer in the presence of five sheiks and fifteen Bedouin; and that they said they would have nothing to do with Arabi. Sheik Mûsa evidently feared to compromise himself, and covertly threatened and evidently frightened Ali, by proposing to carry him off to the Governor of Nackl. He asked what business Ali had to leave his command at such a time to come to see him. Eventually he agreed to come back to Tor with Ali; but just as this was settled our messenger reached Ali with a copy of the letter from the Governor of

Suez, concerning the taking of Cairo and the surrender of Arabi. Ali read these letters out to the sheiks, who, he said, expressed themselves pleased at the news; but we were well aware that both Ali and the Bedouin would have been truly grieved if they had believed it, and they evidently looked upon it as a hoax. Ali stated he had told Mûsa it must be true, because although the document was only a copy, it had the right consecutive official number on it; but Ali showed us by his inquiries that he himself was not satisfied until he saw the original. Mûsa took advantage of the order for twelve camels to say it would take him five days, at which Ali expostulated, as there were at least fifty camels in Wadi Feirân, but Mûsa said they belonged to others. The long-and-short-of-the-matter was, the sheik was going to wait till he heard himself from Suez as to the truth of Arabi's surrender, before he showed any leaning to the side of the British.

Having given his report, Ali was sent in to Tor to get all the camels and donkeys he could muster, Colonel Warren having again decided to make a start for Wadi Feirân to see Sheik Mûsa himself. Early next morning Ali Effendi arrived with some donkeys to take us inland, but only one camel. Mr. West and Captain Grenfell came and urged Colonel Warren not to go without camels, and, the Archimandrite adding an emphatic warning against our entering the desert at such a time without safe-conduct or proper means of transport, we were obliged to give it up, and wait for Mûsa where we were.

On September 21st, the *Tenasserim* troopship arrived with despatches and telegrams, but little fresh news. Mr. West, tired of waiting, and doubtful whether Mûsa

Nusîer would come in at all, left for Suez the same day in the *Tenasserim*. There was, however, little reason for us to give up our object without letting Mûsa Nusîer have every chance. The only reason we could conceive that could induce Sheik Mûsa not to come in, after he had ascertained that Arabi had really surrendered, was that Palmer had been murdered, and that Mûsa was implicated, and this there was no reason for suspecting. Colonel Warren determined, therefore, to wait two or three days longer, the 22nd being the day on which Mûsa should come, according to his last message.

Near our camp was an extensive burial-place. There were tombs of both Christians and Moslems, the former arranged with feet to the east, the latter with feet to the north. At the head of each tomb, on the right-hand side of the body, was a little chamber containing a tot of water, and a little shell for oil, with a wick. These little lamps are lighted by the relatives—on Thursday night by the Moslems, and on Saturday, or Sunday, by the Christians. At the time of a funeral a sheep is killed at the head of the grave, and a feast made there. We were rather startled one evening by seeing lights in the graveyard, and a great deal of talking and singing going on till about 10 p.m. We found that some of the townspeople had come out to visit the graves, and were making merry round the *Weli*, the tomb of the patron sheik.

The evenings out here, even with the heat and mosquitoes, were very delightful, made more so, perhaps, by contrast after the very great heat of the day. During the day there would generally be little or no movement in the air; but about sunset a hot wind would set in, and continue blowing two or three hours. This broke the change from the stifling heat of the day, which cracked up

every wooden article with its dryness, to the cool which sets in in these rarified atmospheres after a heavy dew. Now we would cook and eat our evening meal; and as long as the warm breeze lasted we sat about on the ground outside the tent, smoking and talking, and did not attempt to go to sleep until it had ceased.

One night we were each in turn, when on guard, much exercised by a very small animal, so rapid in its movement that in the darkness we could not quite distinguish what it was. It seemed like a huge ant or spider, about two inches in height and about four inches long. We made many attempts to strike it with our sticks, but it was always too quick for us, and when we struck at it, it would rapidly change its position, generally circling round as fast as the eye could follow in the moonlight, and nearing one from behind. It was like a nightmare. Time after time we repeated the attack with always the same result, to find the object of our onslaught vanish just as we were reaching it, and reappear gazing at us from behind. As no guns were allowed to be fired we could not shoot it, so never ascertained for certain what it was; but I believe it must have been a jerboa. Anyhow, whatever it was, it proved a regular nuisance to us that night.

The jackals also were continually trying to get our food, and the sentry had to have a pile of stones and tent-pegs handy to throw at them when they approached our larder. At times we would leave a piece of meat during the night to simmer over the embers in a three-legged pot; and although we always took care to weight the lid well with large stones, notwithstanding this precaution the jackals would sometimes possess themselves of the contents, by upsetting the pot and making off with the spoil before we could interfere.

Colonel Warren always kept the morning watch, that being the time when an attack was most probable, and was surprised one morning to see what appeared to be the sun rising over the hills before its time; he woke up everyone to see the phenomenon. It turned out to be the comet which had so alarmed Arabi's host before the battle of Tel el Kebîr. It was the first time we had seen it, as being very near to the sun it had not had time, before that morning, to rise over the Sinaitic mountains before daylight came and rendered it invisible. It presented a most brilliant spectacle. The meteors also that we saw on this occasion were very numerous and beautiful.

The Arabs are very wise on the subject of stars, and are never tired of talking about them. At this time they were much concerned about the star *Smaiyeh*, which is the star on the Turkish flag, within the crescent. When the moon approaches this star, the Bedouin say it is very unlucky to set out on a journey. They have this as a command from the prophet Moses, who once disregarded the position of the star, and was mounting his camel to start off on a journey; but when the camel got off its knees the sword of Moses fell out of its scabbard, and cutting the muscle of the camel's leg, incapacitated it. Upon which the seer said:—"Henceforth let no man disregard the star *Smaiyeh*." The star was at this time very near to the moon, and the Bedouin would point to it and shake their heads ominously when reference was made to our projected journey. They are very tenacious of their belief in their legends, and the above-mentioned position of *Smaiyeh* was quite sufficient in their minds to account for Mûsa Nusîer's failure to come to us at Tor.

The view of the Sinaitic mountains that we got from our camp was very grand. Mount Serbal was the striking

feature of the picture, standing out conspicuously in solemn grandeur, amongst a confused mass of purple granite walls. If the sunrise had its attractions, vividly showing up the hard jagged outlines of these mountains, the colours on them were more beautiful as the rays of the evening sun set them all a-glowing in a soft pink, set out in mauve shade and deep blue shadows; and as the sun set and its rays left the tops of the peaky mountains, the whole would sink into shade and the sky suddenly become golden pink by the contrast.

We waited impatiently for Mûsa Nusîer until September 24th, on which day Colonel Warren decided to strike camp and embark on board the *Cockatrice* for Suez. We accordingly sent for donkeys to convey our baggage, and broke up our camp in the evening. Arrived in Tor, our things were taken aboard ship: we paid off the cook Sala, and said good-bye to the Greek Archbishop, who, after shaking hands, retired to the balcony of the convent to smoke his hubble-bubble and watch our departure. There were still arrangements to be made respecting our various messengers despatched over the desert—arrangements which Colonel Warren entrusted to the monk butcher, Neoficus, who was also commissioned to send any message to Suez that might arrive, and in any case to send in a man after a week, whether there was any news or not. And now nothing remained but to pay for the donkeys, and for this the drivers were very anxious as they saw us on the point of departure. Ali Effendi did the part of the unjust steward to perfection, and doubled their accounts all round. However, the sum paid after all was not very large, and shortly after dusk we embarked on the *Cockatrice*, not at all sorry that we had left the miserable town of Tor behind us.

Our expedition to Tor had not been a success, for we had failed to open up communication with the Bedouin. What it would have been if we had stayed two days longer we do not know, for Mûsa actually arrived with the camels, and found we had gone. However, it has often been said that success, if dissected, may appear to be derived from small failures, being arrived at by continually pegging away in one direction, in spite of all obstacles; and it is probable that we owed our success in great measure to our failure at Tor to meet Mûsa, for had we met him, with the impression still on us that the party were alive, we might have gone off after a phantom into Syria, and have lost the thread of the history of the attack and murder.

Although the sudden termination of the war had altered all conditions in Egypt, it would be a long time before it could affect the desert to any great extent. It takes some time to stir up among Bedouin the fervid feeling which exists among other Moslems as to their religion, but once stirred up it cannot again be put on one side by decree. Palmer, in his report of August 1st, had stated, "Arabi Pasha's emissaries have set the Bedouin thinking. They have, for instance, to a great extent kept the fast of Ramadân, which is the first indication I have ever seen of them paying any attention to religious duties"; and no doubt the Bedouin were, at that time, possessed by a feeling towards Christians which had been foreign to their nature for many years. It would now, the war being ended, be more easy to open up communication from Suez through the tribes in Egypt; but the desert itself would perhaps be more unsafe than before. Our plan had been to get from the Towâra among the Tîyahah, who occupied the Tîh, and who were supposed to be friendly to the

British. Syria might have been a better base had it not been that the intrigues of the Syrian officials were likely to frustrate all success; and the Syrian Moslems in towns bordering on the desert were bitterly hostile to Europeans, and would thwart every effort at entering from that direction. There were two other bases possible, Akabah and El Arîsh. The former was under the influence of the Alawîn, who had the name of being very treacherous, and who are really independent both of Egypt and Turkey. El Arîsh would have been a good base, but the Governor was reported to be a fanatic. Little was known about the place; there was no harbour, but a very dangerous coast: besides, the Sowarki, the Bedouin in the neighbourhood, were constantly at war with the Terebîn, and the desert was now very unsettled. With these considerations in view, Colonel Warren decided that the best course was to try to effect an entry into the desert from Suez; by means of the Egyptian Bedouin we should be able to open up communication with the Bedouin east of the Canal, and thus avoid the necessity of either taking troops or going into the desert without escort.

Our visit to Tor had had the effect of making the monks of Sinai our firm friends. They were impressed with the idea that Sir William Hewett's present of grain had saved them from starvation, and that our method of dealing with the natives had saved their lives. It also appeared that we had laid the basis of a firm friendship with Mûsa Nusîer, as soon as he should realise that Arabi had surrendered, and there was no longer cause to fear the Egyptian National party. Although Mûsa's actions had shown vacillation, it is doubtful whether he had not acted perfectly properly for the well-being of his tribe. No Bedoui could have foreseen that the British troops would

be successful, in fact they all thought otherwise; and from that point of view Mûsa had acted in a friendly spirit, and with considerable firmness, in not siding with the Haiwatât, and attempting to massacre the monks of Sinai. While we were at Tor, some Haiwatât were at Wadi Feirân, daily urging that the town and convent should be attacked; but Mûsa stood firm, and said that if they stirred a foot to make his people follow the steps of those who had attacked Palmer and sacked Ayun Mûsa, he would bring down those among his tribe who would obey him and stop them. We subsequently ascertained also that, while we were in camp at the gardens near Tor, Mûsa Nusîer had Bedouin out surrounding us, as he asserted, to protect us, but certainly to watch us. Thus, whether we are to credit Mûsa with our not being attacked while out in this curious position, or attribute it to the fact that we were always on the alert, and could not have been captured without bloodshed, is uncertain.

Among other difficulties, Mr. West believed, and the facts upheld the view, that Captain Grenfell had brought to Suez, and we had taken to Tor, an official who was acting directly for Arabi, and who had been instrumental in keeping the Bedouin from us by stating that it was intended to make them prisoners. This man left us by the *Cockatrice* on September 8th.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL AT SUEZ. NEW PROPOSALS FOR CONTINUING THE SEARCH. JOURNEY TO CAIRO. ARRANGEMENTS FOR WORKING THE DESERT. ZAGAZIG. TRUTH ABOUT THE ALLEGED LOOTING BY THE INDIAN CONTINGENT AT ZAGAZIG. RETURN TO SUEZ. RAID ON AYUN MÛSA AND CAPTURE OF SELÂMI, ONE OF PALMER'S CAMEL-DRIVERS. MISSION TO AKABAH. PREPARATIONS FOR ENTRY INTO THE DESERT. SUEZ SHORT OF WATER.

WE returned to Suez from Tor on the evening of September 25th, just a month having elapsed since we left England, and, finding that Sir William Hewett was at Cairo, we telegraphed to him for instructions. The weather was still exceedingly hot, and the change back again from desert costumes into our thick home uniforms was most uncomfortable.

Great changes had taken place since we left Suez. Then all movement was towards the front, and success lay in the balance; now Arabi's army had succumbed, the tide had turned, and the East Indian Squadron and transports were only awaiting the termination of the Grand Review at Cairo to leave for the East with the Indian troops. The Bedouin, however, had not given in, except where located near the large towns. The desert near Suez, to east and west, was still sealed; and Mr. West had not been able to make any advance whatever in acquiring information concerning the missing party. The Bedouin between Suez and Cairo were known still to be in a very

excited state, anxiously waiting for any opportunity of plunder.

We took up our abode at the Suez Hotel, and after seeing Mr. West, paid a visit to Raoulf Pasha, the Governor of Suez. He was a fine old man of Turkish descent, and had formerly been an Admiral. He was a perfect governor according to Eastern ideas, being quick and masterful, courteous where courtesy was not thrown away, and showed none of the contaminating effects of an unassimilated European civilisation. With him was a very able deputy, Reschid Bey, a native Egyptian, who had been in government service for twenty years, and, having risen by his own ability to his present position, was well up in the etiquette and duties of his office. Reschid Bey had remained at Suez throughout the campaign; not so much from his liking the position, but, as wicked rumour had it, on account of his missing the last train which took his colleagues and the garrison to Cairo, when Suez was occupied by the British troops. He was thus a very interesting and unique specimen of an Egyptian who had not adhered to Arabi Pasha. We could discover, however, no difference between him and other Egyptians. All were entirely one with Arabi; because Arabi was a native Egyptian, whilst the Turkish rulers were regarded as aliens and foreigners. We in England are too much accustomed to lump these Easterns all together, without recognising that they consist of the most diverse entities. To the Egyptians and Syrians, the Turks are only in a degree less barbarous and alien than the Christian nations of Europe.

Colonel Warren's first move towards recovering the missing party was to propose that a new Governor and thirty Egyptian soldiers should be at once despatched to

Nackl, to displace the existing hostile garrison there as an ordinary relief. This Governor Raoulf said was an excellent idea, only there were not thirty Egyptian soldiers faithful to the Khedive to be had; and moreover, as Nackl was in the hands of rebels who still clung to Arabi, it would have to be captured by force. It was then proposed to go and capture it with thirty Indian soldiers; but Raoulf said this would not be sufficient, as the Governor of Nackl had already sent a defiant letter to Osman Bey Rafât, when ordered by the latter to come to Suez, saying that he took his orders from the Governor of El Arîsh—in which he was technically correct, for Nackl being a fort on the Hadj, or pilgrims' route, it was under the Rosmania department at Cairo, and not under the Governor of Suez in any way.

At this time there were at Suez, doing nothing, the Aden Horse, a military corps, about one hundred strong, and accustomed to desert work. It was proposed that we should go to Nackl with them to displace the Governor; and Colonel Griffiths, Commanding H.M. Troops at Suez, was consulted on the matter. As the desert about Suez is very destitute of water—very different in this respect to the desert about Aden—it would be necessary as an ordinary precaution to take with us sufficient water to do the return journey to Suez, should we fail to capture Nackl. Calculation showed that we should require two hundred and fifty camels for this purpose, and as camels travel but slowly, the horses would also be obliged to travel slowly, and would thus, as horses, be useless. So the idea of employing the Aden Horse had to be abandoned.

While in this difficulty, M. Metzakis, who was impressed with the idea that Palmer's party had been carried off to the north-east, suggested that we should go

to Akabah in a gun-boat, and press the Bedouin from there. It was a difficult question to know how to break ground; we wanted to find some vulnerable point, where, by pressure on the Arabs, we might get some information, but to base our operations on Akabah might result in a like failure as we had just experienced at Tor, such isolated places being ill-adapted for organising active operations from, without being certain of the co-operation of the neighbouring Bedouin. In the necessity of obtaining information of the missing men, the question arose whether we should be within the law in arresting any Bedoui in disguise who might come by stealth into Suez; and finding this would not meet with opposition from the Egyptian authorities, provided that we took reasonable precautions to avoid arresting the wrong persons, we cast about to ascertain what Bedouin might be coming into Suez surreptitiously. It would be out of place to describe the secret service Colonel Warren organised in this matter, but success very soon resulted from his operations.

The Egyptian authorities, who took no interest in the rescue of Palmer's party, gave us no assistance: but, nevertheless, our inquiries soon led to the discovery of a method by which we could hope to get into the desert. We found out that amongst the various Bedoui tribes each one in the desert was connected by marriage with one in Egypt; pressure might thus be brought to bear on the tribes in the Arabian desert through the tribes in Egypt. Indeed, we discovered that this was the secret of the power of the great Bedoui sheik (the Shedîd) at Cairo; and that he, in his turn, was kept by force at Cairo, that thus the ruler in Egypt might have control over the Bedouin of the desert. This was an important discovery, and gave us the key which was to open the desert to us; and though the

Egyptian authorities of the Khedive would strenuously deny that they had any power over the Bedouin, this was merely their way of repudiating their responsibilities of government, where nothing was to be got by a show of activity, and we were not deceived thereby. In particular, we ascertained that the Towâra of the Sinaitic peninsula had a connection with the Nofiât Bedouin near Zagazig; and if certain sheiks were arrested we could put pressure upon Mûsa Nusîer and bring him to reason. It was also ascertained that there was a Bedoui near Zagazig named Marbruk, who had taken messages during the war from Arabi Pasha into the desert of Arabia Petræa by swimming the Canal near Serapeum.

Mr. West had received no news from the desert, though it was eleven days since we had despatched Rascheidi from Tor to take the letter to Palmer; but through our spies we learnt that a few days since a son of Metter Sofîa and several Bedouin had come down to Ayun Mûsa to find out what the English were doing. We also learnt an important fact concerning Metter Sofîa himself: that he had some years ago broken off from his tribe, the Lehewât, and was a man of no great influence; and that the Haiwatât, and not the Lehewât, was the important tribe of Bedouin about Suez. We also gained important information about the way to Nackl, and of the position of the only water, Marbook, on that road; making it clear that horses could not get to Nackl without camels to carry their water, and it would be of no advantage to employ the former animals in any desert travelling we had to do.

It took Colonel Warren many hours ferreting out these and such-like items of information, and he had hardly decided that the right course would be to go to Zagazig to secure and interview some Bedouin there, when, while out

for an evening stroll, seeing an English locomotive being shunted on the railway, we ascertained that it had brought some trucks down from Ismailia for telegraph stores, and was going back that same night, Major Sir A. Mackworth, R.E., being in charge. About the same time we received a telegram from Sir William Hewett, directing Colonel Warren to proceed at once to Cairo to see Sir Garnet Wolseley; so we hastily got our baggage together and arranged for our departure with Sir A. Mackworth. Burton was left at Suez in charge, to go back to Tor if necessary to obtain the camels for our proposed journey into the desert, and to watch Ayun Mûsa; and accompanied by myself, and a tag-rag and bob-tail of Arabs, Colonel Warren started for Cairo.

When all the machinery of life is out of gear it is difficult to say what impediments may turn up to prevent progress. Although we were ready, waiting, at 8 p.m., we did not make a start until 1.30 a.m. We jogged and jolted along the uneven line until sunrise, when we arrived at the point on the Sweet-Water Canal where the breach had been made by Arabi's men during the campaign; here three hundred Fellahîn were busily employed repairing the banks, so that Suez might not want for water. A little further on we passed the Aden Horse on their way to Cairo to take part in the review. Their horses and camels were in most splendid condition, both men and animals being turned out as if they were fresh from their barracks at Aden.

We arrived at Ismailia about 7.30 a.m., and after paying a visit to Sir Owen Lanyon, the Commandant, started again for Cairo in another train. It was here a curious sight to watch the difference in the appearance of the regiments dressed in karkee and those in red cloth. As some one remarked, in karkee the privates all looked

like officers, while in the dirty red all the officers looked like privates. Probably, however, the red cloth is the most healthy garment in a climate where the nights are chilly.

On our way past Zagazig we saw on the platform Selim Mosalli, who had been an interpreter to the Admiral at Suez; and finding he was now out of employ Colonel Warren engaged him as our interpreter. We did not leave Zagazig till 4 p.m., and proceeded very slowly towards Cairo, coming to a dead stop at a distance of about fifteen miles; and from here was pointed out to us in the distance the railway station of Cairo in flames. The telegraph-wire being cut we would get no information, and the wildest rumours were afloat, our impression being that the Arabs had risen and were looting Cairo. Our train pushed on to a station about eight miles from Cairo, and then pulled up for the night; we had no food or water, and none was to be bought; and, to crown all, Colonel Warren had a touch of fever, which the want of water very much aggravated. After a tedious night spent in the train a lovely morning broke upon us; by day-light we pushed on to within a mile of Cairo, which was as near as we could go, for the up-line in front of us was blocked with carriages and locomotives, which could neither enter the burning station to be discharged, nor be shunted on to the down-line. We walked into Cairo with our baggage, arriving in a famished and miserable state.

Sir William Hewett was at the Abdeen Palace, down with fever, and he referred us to Sir Garnet Wolseley and Sir Edward Malet, as he himself expected to return to India immediately after the review. Colonel Warren had an interview with Sir Garnet, at which it was decided that we were to continue our search under the Admiralty and the Foreign Office, doing everything, as much as possible,

through the Egyptian Government. During the day Colonel Warren, in company with Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, who was employed under the Foreign Office, called upon Sir E. Malet, the Consul-General, and made four proposals for the furtherance of the work. These proposals were as follows :—

(1) The immediate nomination of a new Governor for El Arîsh ;
(2) A new Governor for Nackl ;
(3) A new Governor at Akabah ;
(4) That Salâmi Shedîd, the head-sheik of the Egyptian Bedouin, should be placed at his (Colonel Warren's) disposal.

These points arranged for, Colonel Warren undertook to manage all the minor details with regard to our entry into the desert after the missing party.

Next day, September 30th, having a great number of small points on which to consult the Minister, Riaz Pasha, Colonel Warren went to see him during the morning. An order was obtained on the Mudîr of Zagazig to deliver up to us the Bedouin we required ; another order was also obtained directing Salâmi Shedîd to place his brother at our disposal, but we could not obtain the services of the Shedîd himself, as he was required at Cairo to keep the Bedouin in order. Colonel Warren also waited on Sir Beauchamp Seymour, who arranged that we should have a credit of five thousand pounds, and desired that our reports should in future be sent through Captain Stephenson, R.N., Senior Naval Officer at Suez.

In the afternoon Salâmi Shedîd visited us, bringing with him an Arab whom he introduced as his brother, and to whom he gave instructions to obey Colonel Warren's directions. This brother seemed to have a touch

of the Fellah about him, so Colonel Warren at once taxed Shedîd with duplicity, stating his belief that the man was not his brother. After many lies Salâmi admitted that the man was not his brother, but merely a sheik of cameleers who had just been released from prison. He was not in the least abashed, but highly amused, at being found out in a lie; however, he promised faithfully to bring his real brother over during the afternoon, a promise he did not keep, for we saw nothing more of him, and Colonel Warren had to draw the attention of Sir C. Wilson to the fact that Shedîd showed no inclination or desire to assist us.

The *soi-disant* brother proved to be one Selâmi, who had been employed by Palmer at Suez to buy camels during the war. He had been captured by Arabi's soldiers and severely beaten; in fact, his feet were then a mass of wounds and bruises, and he could scarcely walk. Selâmi's story was recorded at the Consulate, and then he was taken into our service as a temporary measure.

In the afternoon the review of the British Army of Occupation took place, a sight which struck the Egyptians with astonishment. The troops all looked in fine condition and made a grand display; but it was the Indian troops that the Arabs most admired and feared, as they all knew that in the hour of victory they could not be made to stay their hand as can British soldiers.

We started about noon on October 1st for Zagazig, where we arrived about 3 p.m. We went at once to see the Mudîr, to deliver our letters and state our business. On arrival at the Muderîa we found the Mudîr surrounded by about fifty of the townspeople. On hearing of our errand he took us on one side, and was very civil. Colonel Warren telling him that he wished him to send

to the village of Metradim and arrest some Bedouin with their relatives, the Mudîr at once sent a *chowish* and two *zaptiehs* with a letter to the head man, and expressed his belief that they would return with the men required in the morning.

One of our first objects at Zagazig was to find Mr. Pickard, a telegraph-engineer, who had been engaged in cutting the telegraph-wire in the desert after Captain Gill disappeared. We soon found him, and arranged that he should dine with us. He gave us his account of how he cut the telegraph-wires from Gaza, but could offer no definite suggestion as to what had become of Palmer's party. Like most of the Europeans in Egypt, he knew nothing about the Bedouin, their manners or customs, and could give us no real assistance. He informed Colonel Warren, however, that he could arrest a Bedoui near Gaza, who said he had assisted in killing two "accursed" Franks: and he said he had evidence that the Governor of El Arîsh had sent Sowarki Bedouin after Palmer to bring him in dead or alive, when on his journey from Gaza to Suez.

Zagazig is a large town of about forty thousand inhabitants, mostly fanatical Moslems. At the time we visited it it boasted of but one little inn. There were very few Europeans there, and those mostly English and French; the former having to do with the telegraph and the latter with the railway department. These all met together at the inn in the evening after dinner, and there often resulted some lively conversation, for many of the French had stuck to their places during the war and had been of great service to Arabi, while most of the English had refused to assist in the fight against their own country. The evening we were there, there was a good deal of

drinking going on, and one man called another a traitor for helping Arabi's troops during the war. A fight appeared to be imminent, but at the critical moment a big Scotchman intervened and averted a disaster.

While at Cairo we had heard grave accounts of the behaviour of the Indian Contingent when they reached Zagazig, after the battle of Tel el Kebîr; and rumours had been afloat that disgraceful atrocities had been committed. We had now an opportunity of learning what actually took place, and it was very gratifying to find that these stories were utterly untrue. Several houses had been occupied by the troops, but no wholesale destruction had taken place' and any damage done had been generally due to the carelessness of servants. For example, in the house of Mr. X., where some officers had been quartered, and which was supposed to have been the scene of the greatest disorder, the only damage done was the melting the bottom out of a silver teapot, which had been put on the fire to warm some water in, and the using of a few handkerchiefs and napkins as dish-cloths.

We went over another house, the owner of which had just returned. There was a profusion of knick-knacks about, which showed that no rioting or looting could have taken place; and the owner produced some excellent liqueurs out of his cupboard, which we much enjoyed.

The Consul at Zagazig declared that there had been no looting done there; and he was very full of admiration for the manner in which our troops had behaved on entering the town flushed with victory. It was easy to see, however, that there was considerable reason for getting up the rumour at Cairo respecting the looting of Zagazig: the troops concerned were returning to India at once, and there would thus be an opportunity for raising the question

of compensation. We subsequently heard that large sums had been paid to the owners of houses for losses which, to judge from our inquiries, never occurred. Perhaps the strongest proof that our troops did no damage in Zagazig was the fact that the people had evidently no experience of the disabilities of war, but seemed to be under the impression that the British Army was a myth, and that Arabi was all right and enjoying himself at Cairo. There had been many cases of rude usage on the part of the Moslems to the native Christians, which had been severely punished by the Mudîr; but the Christians were still very scared, and were even grateful to us for walking about the town in uniform, as object lessons of the existence of a British army.

Much has been said about the temper of the Fellahîn during the war. Some people think that they were apathetic, and not inclined either to one side or another; and that the chiefs alone were responsible for the Arabist rebellion; this, however, was not the opinion of those who knew the country best. The people certainly were apathetic so long as they were kept under; but the Arabist rebellion was essentially a national movement, deriving its spirit from racial and fanatical prejudices. Sir Richard Burton recounts how the main centres of fanaticism, "Damanhûr, Kafr Zayyât and Tantah, all made themselves infamous during the rebellion. The 'mild' Fellah and his milder wife tied the limbs of murdered Franks to dogs' tails, poured petroleum upon the poor brutes, and set them on fire. These horrors have sunk a great gulf between native and stranger, which will not be bridged over during this generation." It was the general opinion of those who knew the country best that, putting aside isolated cases of personal friendship, and far-sighted cases

of self-interest, the lower orders, if they once got the upper hand, would necessarily, in times of excitement, murder every Christian they could come across.

While in the bazaar at Zagazig we obtained a seal for use among the Arabs, with Colonel Warren's name in Arabic engraved upon it. Before it could be handed over by the engraver it was necessary to insert and sign a certificate, in a book kept for the purpose, that Warren Bey was the owner's real name, and this certificate was duly attested by the interpreter. The object of this precaution was that, in case the seal should be lost, there might be a record of it, so that it might be cried down. It was very interesting to find such care taken about these signet rings, which have been in use since the earliest times; and in the East, where writing is in the hands of the scribes, they are of the greatest use.

Early next morning, after our arrival at Zagazig, we went to the Muderîa, and ascertained that the men we had demanded, three sheiks and four Bedouin, had all been brought in. Our train of followers was now swelling fast; and with the original Arabs, Selâmi, his four wives and children, and the Zagazig Bedouin with their guard, a railway truck was filled. We left Zagazig at 3 p.m., arriving in the evening at Ismailia, where we had to stop the night. On our way past Tel el Kebîr we heard that the Bedouin were busy at work exhuming and stripping the bodies of the dead, both British and Egyptian. A Bedoui will strip his own dead father if he has a chance.

We had suffered torment from the sand-flies and heat at Zagazig, and at Ismailia we endured tortures from the swarms of bugs. Here the troops were evacuating with all speed, and the once busy "base" had already a deserted appearance. We arrived at Suez in the evening of

October 3rd, and found Burton down with a touch of fever at the hotel. He had some interesting information to give of the progress of affairs since our departure for Cairo.

On September 29th, the messenger sent to Nackl by Raoulf Pasha had returned, reporting that when he had arrived within ten hours' journey of Nackl he had been taken prisoner by fifty to sixty men of the Haiwatât and Terebîn tribes. After being kept prisoner three days at Jebel Hassan, near Wadi Sadr, he was released, and returned direct to Suez. He gave information that there were four Bedouin, of the tribes that captured Palmer's party, now acting as spies at Ayun Mûsa; and said that he had heard these men quarrelling, and in anger one had threatened to shoot another "as he had the Englishmen." Lieutenant Burton, knowing Colonel Warren's anxiety to capture some of the inculpated Bedouin, consulted with the Consul, and with his concurrence went to Raoulf Pasha and suggested several methods of securing these men; all of which methods the Pasha judged impracticable. Burton then went to Colonel Griffiths, Commandant of Suez, and obtained from him the assistance of an English officer and twelve Indian sowars. He made all his arrangements for surrounding Ayun Mûsa and capturing the men there, but at the last moment the movements were countermanded.

A messenger from Tor had arrived on October 1st, bringing a letter from Mûsa Nusîer, in which he gave his submission to the Khedive. He had evidently sent somewhere for corroboration of the information we had given him, and had then proceeded to Tor with the twelve camels requisitioned by us, arriving four days after the appointed time. A letter was now despatched to Mûsa Nusîer, desiring him to bring his camels at once to Suez.

During our absence at Cairo, Quartermaster-Sergeant Kennedy, R.E., had embarked for England; for, the war being now over, the object for which his services had been procured had ceased to be. He had proved himself most useful in charge of stores, and in assisting generally while at Tor.

Sard, the brother of the Salâmi Shedîd, arrived at Suez during the night of October 4th, with an uncle of his, Hadj Mohammed. Sard was a morose, incapable young man, but, owing to his near relationship to Salâmi, he took precedence of Hadj Mohammed, a much abler person, of considerable presence and some authority. Soon after our return to Suez Colonel Warren brought our Bedouin before Raoulf Pasha. His Excellency could offer no suggestion as to the next move, but showed his anxiety to assist by roundly rating our retinue, and calling them all "pigs." This did not seem to get us any more forward, and Colonel Warren proposed that Shedîd's kin should show their mettle at once, by going out to Ayun Mûsa and catching the four spies that were there. It was particularly important to capture a Bedoui named Ali Shwair, who had been heared boasting that he had killed an Englishman, and would kill anyone else who endeavoured to capture him. So it was arranged that our Bedouin should go by boat to Ayun Mûsa that night, to make the necessary raid.

During the day we arrested in the town one of M. Costa's gardeners from Ayun Mûsa; his evidence relative to what took place there during the war proved afterwards very useful.

The efforts of our Bedouin at Ayun Mûsa during the night were only partially successful; they allowed Ali Shwair and two Haiwatât to escape, but they brought in nine prisoners, two of whom were gardeners employed there. One of the prisoners, Selâmi, proved to be a camel-driver who had started with Palmer, and from him we

obtained the first direct account of what had happened upon Palmer's ill-fated expedition. Cross-examination elicited a number of important details connected with the composition of Palmer's party; and Selâmi informed us that Palmer had separated himself from his baggage on the second day after leaving Suez, going on ahead with his guide, companions, and the interpreter. On the morning of the following day, August 12th, the baggage party was attacked by a large party of men, the camel-drivers making little resistance. Selâmi professed to know nothing of what had occurred to Palmer and his companions subsequent to their departure, but he was able to give us the name of two of the principal Bedouin who had attacked and looted Palmer's baggage, these being Salem Sheyk and Salem Subheh, both of the Haiwatât tribe. He also stated that there were men of the Lehewât, Dubûr, and Terebîn tribes amongst the marauders. Selâmi finally cleared up all uncertainty concerning the position of Wadi Sadr, which had now clearly nothing to do with Wadi Sidri; but he left us still in doubt as to the fate of Palmer and his companions, thus it was all important not to relax our endeavours to open up communication with the desert tribes.

It being desirable to prevent the missing men being carried off into the interior of Arabia, where it might be impossible to rescue them, it was decided to visit Akabah at once, to inform the Governor and people there of the collapse of Arabi, and to take measures to close that way of escape from our search parties. This done, Colonel Warren decided to enter the desert from Suez, to follow up the steps of the missing party, and thoroughly to pacificate the desert. The desert, however, was still, to all intents and purposes, closed; and as the authorities were very

cautious as to permitting us to enter the desert at all, and as it was manifestly undesirable to risk another such disaster as had befallen Palmer and his companions, Colonel Warren decided to form the expedition of a powerful body of Egyptian Bedouin, and, making them responsible for finding the persons in the attack, send them into the desert to pursue their investigations alone. It is doubtful, however, whether he ever meant this expedition to go without him, though it was very fortunate that he took up that line in his communication with the sheiks; for otherwise, closely connected as they were with the Bedouin of the desert, all trace of the party might have been removed before we arrived at the spot where the murder was committed.

On October 6th, Colonel Warren again took the sheiks he had brought from Cairo and Zagazig before the Governor of Suez, and in his presence asked them how they would propose to arrange for an expedition into the desert to investigate into the murder of the Englishmen, and arrest the guilty parties. They said they would require two hundred Bedouin for such an expedition; one hundred and fifty for their own protection, and fifty besides for ours. They were informed that they need not trouble themselves on our account, but were to provide simply for their own purposes. Thereupon Raoulf Pasha despatched a telegram to Riaz Pasha, requesting him to send twenty Bedouin from each of certain tribes in the Kalyûb and Dukolîa districts, amounting in all to one hundred and sixty, and urging that they should be at Suez before the elapse of eight or nine days at the latest.

Next morning there was no water in the Sweet-Water Canal, which supplies Suez from the Nile by way of Ismailia; and it was probable that in a day or two the

town would be without water, excepting that stored in the docks. As this state of things might endanger the health of the place, and interfere with our operations, Colonel Warren, before leaving for Akabah, decided to find out the reason for the canal being empty, it having been ascertained that water was passing freely along the canal by Ismailia. So offering his services to make an inspection of the canal, he started off with an escort of Native cavalry one morning to ride up the bank of the Sweet-Water Canal. The country about the canal was in the hands of the Bedouin, who were still in a turbulent condition, and it was thought that they might have cut the bank of the canal some miles from Suez. After proceeding some fifteen miles it was found that the water was coming down slowly, the banks being in good order; but owing to the water having been cut off for so long a period it was absorbed very quickly as it advanced, and would require probably three or four days more to reach Suez. The bottom of the canal was covered with a thick growth of grass and reeds, and the slope of the canal from Ismailia being only one in forty thousand, the water passes very slowly along it.

Colonel Warren returned to Suez the same day, ready to start in H.M.S. *Eclipse* for Akabah the same evening: the Admiral, however, had meanwhile postponed our departure until the following day, so as to give time for preparation. The time allowed to us for the expedition to Akabah was limited to five days, in order that the *Eclipse* might get back to sail after the East Indian Squadron, which was to start at once for the Indian Ocean. We therefore bade a regretful farewell to Admiral Sir William Hewett, who had throughout our proceedings taken the greatest interest in every detail, and given us every assistance in his power.

CHAPTER IV.

DEPARTURE FOR AKABAH IN H.M.S. "ECLIPSE." LANDING AT DHAHAB. ARRIVAL AT AKABAH. ATTEMPT TO LAND. CRITICAL POSITION OF LANDING-PARTY. ENFORCED HOSPITALITY. CONFERENCE WITH THE GOVERNOR AND MOHAMMED GAD. THE BANQUET. THE LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR OF NACKL. TIDINGS OF PALMER'S MURDER. MOHAMMED GAD, SHEIK OF THE ALAWÍN. RETURN TO SUEZ.

SUNDAY seems always to have been our day for action in Egypt. At dawn on the morning of October 8th, we were busy writing off letters for home and for Cairo; and at 6 a.m. were waiting near the dusty railway for the trolly which had been ordered to carry us and our luggage down to the docks. The trolly did not arrive, however, and seeing a long freight-train full of hay and stores being shunted near us, we got all our baggage and Bedouin on to it; and, after considerable uncertainty as to where we should be carried, we triumphantly entered the docks on top of the hay at about 8.30 a.m. Our passage over the three miles down to the docks was a very amusing one; the train moved slowly, and the Arabs thronged the line on either side, jumping on to the trucks wherever they could get a footing, and then down again when they had gone as far as they required; others were hanging on, or running by the side, chaffing us at our snug seat on the hay, squeezing on to the steps and buffers, and climbing

into the trucks. Some attempted to join us aloft on the hay, but this was not to be allowed, and they were speedily repulsed, and retired discomfited to the sides of the truck.

Arrived at the docks, we unloaded the trucks of our baggage and walked off with our possessions; there seemed to be no one in charge of the stores and merchandise on the train, and had we walked off with anything not our own it would have been all one to the officials; they seemed quite indifferent as to the care of the property they carried. It was always a mystery to me how things ever did reach their destination in the East.

A steam-launch was waiting for us which soon transferred our motley assembly, and curious assortment of luggage and edibles, to H.M.S. *Eclipse*. The sailors were highly amused at the appearance of our company, and especially at the strange food they had brought to eat; for as there would be difficulty in feeding the Bedouin on ship's rations, they had been directed to cater for themselves, and accordingly brought with them quantities of vegetables and water-melons, Bedoui bread, pots of rancid butter, &c., with a variety of queer pots and pans for cooking, which quite took the fancy of the cooks of the cuddy. Our party consisted of Colonel Warren, myself, Mosalli, Ossad, Hadj Mohammed Shedîd, three minor sheiks of the Nofiât tribe, and Hassan Effendi, the newly appointed Governor of Nackl. It was difficult to know how to arrange for the accommodation of so strange an assembly on board a man-of-war; but Captain Garforth was equal to the occasion, and soon rigged up awnings between the guns on deck, where all the Moslems, including the stately Governor of Nackl, fraternised; the sailors making pets of the more lively of them as though they

had been a superior race of monkeys. We were heartily relieved to find that Hassan Effendi, a Captain of Egyptian Artillery, could so happily chum with the Bedouin, as it was difficult to know how else to locate him.

We quickly weighed anchor and passed out of the harbour, saluting the flag-ship as we went. Outside in the anchorage was a magnificent spectacle. The white ships of the East Indian Squadron were then getting ready to leave the Red Sea for Indian waters; and in addition was a large fleet of transports, also painted white, waiting to take the Indian Contingent home again. All the sailors rejoiced at their near departure, and the chance it would bring of once more landing on *terra firma;* for a large number of them had not set foot on land, except on duty, for several months. Our voyage down the Gulf of Suez was decidedly warm; but the hospitality of the ship's officers knew no bounds, and, some supported by "cock-tails," others by water-melons, and others relying solely on the all-invigorating cigarette, we merrily passed the time away.

Tor was sighted during the first night out, and early next morning we successfully eluded the sunken reefs and rocks near the toe of the peninsula, steaming into the Gulf of Akabah without accident. We proceeded, however, with great caution, with men constantly in the chains, for no English steamer had ever been in these waters before, and the only man-of-war that had ever been there was a surveying ship, nigh forty years before. A Khedivial steamer had been here a few years before, but had not added anything to the knowledge of the sea.

At about 3 p.m. we sighted a ring of palm-trees on the barren coast of the peninsula, which we knew to be Dhahab,

where was supposed to be a good anchorage and a fishing village. Here we anchored for the night, as it was not safe to feel our way onwards in the dark. On a low, sandy beach, behind which rose the mountains of the peninsula, lay the village of Dhahab, consisting of a few mud huts only capable of holding about a dozen families. There was little life visible, and what there was was struggling with all haste inland up the mountain side; while some rebellious camels, which had refused to move on, were straying about the plain. As the people might still believe themselves to be at war, and might, according to their custom, be lying in ambush, we proceeded with some caution to land, escorted by six blue-jackets and accompanied by our Bedouin. We had some amusement in catching a camel; and sent Marbruk, one of the Bedouin we had brought from Zagazig, up the rising ground inland to see if there were any people about. The heat was intense, and we lay under bushes waiting for Marbruk's return, and watching the beautiful effects of the sun setting behind the granite mountains. Marbruk stayed away some hours, and when he returned spun us a long yarn as to his adventures. He had caught up two men who were carrying dates away, who had told him that the tribe of M'said had struck their encampment, situated in the valley on the other side of the hills, on hearing of the approach of our ship, and had driven their flocks and herds inland. He had accompanied the men to a beautiful *wadi*, where there was a palm-grove, a stream, and green pastures. There were some women there with some sheep, but they would not come down to sell them, so Marbruk had to return alone. He declared that they knew where Palmer was concealed, but would not say. They had heard that Mûsa Nusîer and his tribe were

flying in the direction of Syria. In fact, it was a genuine case of thought-reading; Marbruk told us exactly what he thought we knew, or wanted to know, and no more.

We left Dhahab at 6 a.m. on the 10th, and proceeded up the gulf, watching with interest the barren coasts on either hand. We sighted Akabah about noon, up to which time we had not seen a sign of humanity on either shore. Near Akabah the gulf ends, and gives place to Wadi Arabah, but of this there was yet no sign; the mountains, converging slightly from their path on either side of the gulf, continue their course to the north without intermission, and between them lie the sands of the Arabah,

THE ARABAH—LOOKING NORTH FROM AKABAH.

dotted with scrub and marked along the shore-line by a fringe of bushes and palm-trees. As we neared the head of the gulf about 1 p.m. we could see the palm-groves of Akabah on the eastern shore, a happy relief to the eye after the continuous red mountains, and blue sky and sea. We could see the green flag of Arabi waving above the castle-walls; but as we approched nearer and passed the fort it was quietly hauled down, and no flag was to be seen. The officials were evidently not anxious to be too defiant, at the same time they did not hoist the Egyptian (Turkish) flag. We could see through our

glasses that a general exodus of all the flocks was taking place, and many people were hurrying away up the mountain side, while armed men were coming in and assembling near the castle.

The castle of Akabah is a strongly built caravansarai in the form of a fort. It is about 100 feet square and has towers and battlements and a field-gun or two, one of which was mounted on a commanding tower. It is of the class of buildings constructed in the 16th century by Suleiman the Magnificent, for the protection of pilgrims on the Hadj route, and in Europe would be considered a fine structure. It has numerous and rather dilapidated chambers and stables for the accommodation of the pilgrims; these chambers all open into the court-yard, there being but one entrance to the fort. Akabah is the third station of the Hadj route after leaving Cairo, the first being a point on the Sweet-Water Canal near Suez, and the second the fort of Nackl. These stations are generally distant from one another three days camel-journey, or about 100 miles, that being the greatest distance a loaded camel can go without drinking. Even to reach these stations the camel's endurance is often tried to the utmost; and that many succumb to the privations is attested by the mute witness of their bones which lie bleaching on the desert track. No desert Bedouin are admitted into these forts, which are defended by Egyptian or Turkish Governors and Mogarabite Irregulars—sturdy Moslems from the Tunisian provinces and Morocco, who do not fear the Bedouin of Arabia.

The town lies principally to the north of the fort, and is a series of mud-built houses of the usual type, accommodating about 1000 persons. In front of these houses, fringing the sea-coast, are gardens of date-palms, surrounded

by stone walls about six feet in height on the outside, and with thorny faggots built into a hard mud coping. These walls are broken up into sections by transverse walls, and the ground being filled up somewhat on the inside, the whole present a formidable series of stockades about twenty yards from the water-line, and extending up the coast for nearly a mile, as far as the head of the gulf. Behind these are again other walls on a higher level, until the town is reached; and beyond this again are hills of sand to the east, rising towards the mountain chain which borders the gulf on the eastern side.

In front of the fort was anchored a solitary dhow, by which the garrison traded with Koseir, on the western shore of the Red Sea, and with Suez. Sailing communication with Suez is almost impracticable for a large portion of the year, for a dhow which may come down the Gulf of Suez in a few hours, will take weeks to get back again up to Akabah, and *vice versâ*. It was interesting to see this dhow, the sole representative of the fleets of Ezion-geber which traded with Ophir. Where the site of Ezion-geber may be is still somewhat uncertain, but it cannot be far from the head of the gulf; and there is a general consensus of opinion that the ancient town of Elath is marked by Akabah. Elath is mentioned by Greek and Roman writers up to the seventh century, when it was taken by the Moslems. It was taken and retaken by the Christians during the Crusades, and, after that, was not visited by Europeans until as late as 1822, when Ruppell succeeded in examining the site. Since then there have been many visitors, amongst the last of whom were Professor Hull and Colonel Kitchener, R.E., the present Sirdar of the Egyptian Army.

As we steamed past the town we saw the inhabitants

hurrying to and fro in great excitement. As we afterwards discovered, they were in momentary expectation of an attack, being quite unaware that Arabi had fallen and that peace had been proclaimed. They had heard, on the other hand, numerous Arab fabrications, which declared that our fleet had been captured and sunk, that we had been worsted in every encounter, that our army was destroyed and our soldiers in irons; in consequence of which, and owing to their intense ignorance, they were entirely under the impression that they were fully a match for us, that their old 12-pounder was equal to all our guns, and that under no circumstances would we be able to reduce their fort to submission if we attacked it. All they were afraid of was that their houses and their goods might be destroyed, and these latter they commenced placing in security. They were Arabists to a man, and had received orders to be prepared for an attack from a ship of war, to oppose any landing to the utmost, and to take all prisoners they could, but not to fire until they were fired upon. It will be seen by their subsequent behaviour that they rigidly attempted to carry out their instructions. As we passed the castle numerous parties of armed men were to be seen running along the shore and gardens following us, and stopping opposite to us when the *Eclipse* anchored, about three-quarters of a mile above the fort. They were, for the most part, concealed from us on deck, but could be plainly seen from the "tops."

It was now evident that we must be prepared for a hostile reception, for which we were somewhat curiously situated; for *we* were at peace with them, and had a strong additional incentive to risk much rather than engage in an encounter, for Professor Palmer and his

party might be in their hands—might even be prisoners in the castle; *they* on the other hand were, as far as they knew, still at war with us, and any information we might give them as to the declaration of peace would only be looked upon as a ruse. Colonel Warren hoped to bring them to reason without bloodshed by gradually persuading them of the facts regarding the war, but it would evidently be a delicate affair, and Captain Garforth got all ready to help us in case of need.

We put off to the shore in two cutters. In the first were Colonel Warren, Lieutenant Henderson, R.N., myself, Mosalli, our Bedouin, the new Governor of Nackl, and twelve armed blue-jackets. In the second cutter were twenty armed marines. As we rowed to the shore the natives showed so hostile an attitude, that it was evidently useless to attempt to land immediately under our guns, as we would wish to have done; so we rowed parallel to the shore towards the fort in hopes of an opportunity arising to open up negotiations. The natives followed us up behind the walls, always presenting a front when we paused, to oppose a landing, and swarming behind the walls and trees, and whatever cover was available.

Just in front of the fort was a gap in the gardens, leaving a vacant space of fore-shore, each side of which the walls ran back, forming flanks from which a cross-fire could be poured on the ground in front. Just before we arrived opposite this place we put in straight for the shore, but as we came up to beach our boat, we saw hundreds of muskets levelled at us over the walls, and it was evident that to persist in landing would be to risk the lives of every man in the boats. Colonel Warren therefore directed the cutter to put back, and when we were about fifty yards from the shore we commenced a parley with the natives,

calling for the Governor, whom we saw on the beach, and hoisting a white flag. In the meantime, seeing the very hostile attitude of the Arabs, and wishing to avoid being caught in a trap if we again attempted to beach our boat, Colonel Warren desired Lieutenant Henderson to position the second cutter, with the marines, behind the large dhow, which was anchored in front of the fort at about eighty yards from the shore; so that they might be able to open fire upon the shore from under cover, should we be fired upon while landing.

The Governor of Akabah seeing a comrade, the new Governor of Nackl, with us in Egyptian uniform, and our company of Bedouin, who were shouting themselves hoarse, began to think we might be relating facts, and came down to the water's edge, filled with curiosity to know who our Moslem party were, and how they came on our side. We told him to drive back the Arabs who crowded behind him; but this he did not succeed in doing, though he raved at them, pulled their hair, and threw large stones at them. They only dodged his missiles, however, swore at him in return, and came back full of determination to protect their hearths and homes.

In the midst of the excitement a plucky Mogarabite *zaptieh* swam off to our boat, while at the same time the Governor put off in a small skiff to get nearer to us, in order to satisfy his curiosity. The *zaptieh* was soon convinced that our story was not all sham, and shouted out his conversion to the shore. The Governor getting the more curious, we conversed rapidly with him until our boats drifted together, and before he knew what he was about he was locked with us, and our first object was gained; for we felt it was unlikely that the Arabs would open fire upon us whilst their Governor was with us and

in our power. At first there was a cry that we were taking the Governor prisoner, and more excitement; but this calmed down, as he was to be seen from the shore hugging and kissing the Moslems in our boat. He was meanwhile taking in the news, and when he realised the truth he expressed his great delight at Arabi's capture, suddenly became a staunch Khedivist, and shouted to the people that we must be allowed to land. We now approached the beach again, and a few of the people on the shore hoisted white pieces of rag, and came down towards us into the water; but the majority kept behind the walls, in defiance of our landing. Colonel Warren, however, now saw his opportunity, for the natives on the beach near us gave us increased security against being fired upon; so we rapidly beached our boat, keeping on one side of the dhow, so that the marines might have full scope for their fire should occasion require it. The Arabs refused to allow more than three white men to land, so Colonel Warren, Lieutenant Henderson, and myself went ashore upon the shoulders of our swarthy antagonists, and at once mixed with the crowd, together with our interpreter and our Bedouin.

The excitement of the people now reached its zenith; some wanted to shoot us on the spot, while others shouted to make prisoners of us and carry us off to the castle. The only man who seemed to have any authority or to possess any common-sense, was a Bedoui sheik who suddenly appeared on the scene. He stated that he was Mohammed Gad of the Alawîn, and at once took a prominent part in the proceedings, allaying the excitement by drawing his sword and belabouring all he met with the flat of it. We exerted ourselves to spread the news of the peace; but the majority of the people would not

believe it, and kept behind the walls with their muskets levelled on us. The Governor and his officials exercised their ingenuity in devising reasons why we should go up to the fort; but we were quite as loth to be made prisoners as they, at this stage, were anxious to get us into their power, and Colonel Warren politely and flatly declined the invitation. Matters were at a deadlock, when Colonel Warren told the Governor to send for coffee at once, being anxious that the ceremony of drinking coffee and eating salt might be performed as soon as practicable, as that would tend to subdue the feeling against us.

We were just thinking that we had succeeded in reducing the crowd to somewhat of a calm, when the Master-Gunner of the fort, a sturdy old soldier, rushed down the beach in a most excited state, and declared that we should not stir until he had proof of the peace we talked of. Colonel Warren produced the Khedive's *bosta* (proclaiming the peace) and a letter from the Governor of Suez to the Governor of Akabah; also some Arabic newspapers containing announcements of Arabi's collapse. They were handed over to the Governor, who read them out loud; still the majority refused to believe the news, insisting that the papers were fabricated for the occasion. It was of no avail to jeer at the idea of newspapers being printed off for the sake of Akabah. Akabah was to them the metropolis of the world, and its importance was not to be made light of. Colonel Warren still clamoured for coffee, which the Governor objected to bring down to the beach; but at last he gave way, though with a bad grace, getting up somewhat of an altercation in doing so, so that our Bedouin, who were in a very tremulous state, got very frightened. One of them, in his anxiety, fortunately supplied a diversion by suddenly plumping down on all fours to pray

for the Moslem paraphrase of the leading rule in whist is "when you are in doubt go through the prayer formulæ." Faraj forgot that he had journeyed somewhat to the east since leaving his home, and considerably shocked the Akabese by his ignorance of the position of his *Kibleh*, turning himself nearly away from the *Kaaba*. The attention of all was at once turned to his mistake, and a little timely chaff by Colonel Warren raised a laugh, and went far to allay the excitement.

The Khedive's proclamation was now read aloud by our interpreter, and when it was ended the Governor was ordered to send the people away, which he and his *zaptiehs* essayed to do, throwing stones at them and striking them with the flats of their swords. The people submitted to this with their wonted good humour; but it effected little, for they always returned to their places directly the attacks upon them were relinquished. We now moved under the shade of some palm-trees, close to the walls, desiring to get something innocuous behind us; but on looking over the wall we found the interiors still lined with armed men, crouching behind them. After a good deal of talking we succeeded in getting these away, and also a clear line down to our boat, but this we could only effect by a compromise by sending the second cutter with the marines back to the ship.

Before coffee was brought down the Governor made a final attempt to persuade us to go up to the fort; but Colonel Warren judged that matters had not sufficiently ripened for us to do this with impunity. Cushions were brought down, and we all endeavoured to be as amiable and pleasant to each other as possible. Colonel Warren expressed the desire to buy some sheep, and offered passages to Suez to anyone who wished to go. Sheep were

brought—miserable animals, but it was politic to go through all the forms of a bargain; so we haggled away, and the time passed by, eventually the animals being purchased for sixteen shillings apiece. Of course, this was merely a matter of diplomacy for there was plenty of food on board, and Captain Garforth did not want any more live stock; but, in Colonel Warren's opinion, nothing could so impress upon the people the fact of peace being restored as such a purchase after due and ceremonious bargaining.

Towards sunset the weaker sex suddenly raised a diversion against us; the women began to wail and lament, declaring that if we were allowed to remain on shore they would all be murdered, and they rushed about exciting their spouses to attack us. We therefore made rapid preparations for departure before darkness should come on, leaving our Bedouin on shore for the night to talk over matters with the natives, and get all the information they could. Especially were they to discover whether Professor Palmer was a prisoner in the fort, as we half suspected he was; or whether he had been carried off, and in what direction. Before leaving we accepted an invitation from the Governor to dine in the fort with him next day; then putting off, we arrived on board the *Eclipse* at nightfall.

At 6.30 a.m. next morning we left for the shore, in the same order as yesterday, except that the second cutter with the marines kept well out from the landing-place. We hoped that the excitement would have now pretty well subsided; but we found that the mob of armed men still followed us, lining the walls and concentrating their muskets upon us when we came in to the landing-place. This was awkward, as in case one had gone off by accident an encounter might have been precipitated, so we shouted our expostulations to the Governor. He replied that he

really could not control the people, but that if we sent away the second cutter the excitement might subside. Colonel Warren decided to risk the consequences for the sake of getting news of Palmer, and sent the marines back to the ship. We then beached our boat and landed; but there was still great excitement, and the natives, still persisting in covering us with their muskets, refused to go away. The Governor was on the shore to receive us, so Colonel Warren insisted that he could not leave the beach until their muskets were taken off us: eventually we compromised matters again by sending our cutter some distance from the shore, while we landed, in addition to those of yesterday, two ships officers and two armed blue-jackets, so that we were seven Europeans in all.

We now walked up to the fort, Mohammed Gad and the Governor doing their best to keep the crowd at a safe distance from us; but the people soon hemmed us in on all sides and tried to hustle us, until, when we got within the great archway of the fort, the massive iron-cased gates were closed and bolted, and the excited Arabs left outside to beat at the gates and shout themselves hoarse. It was not an agreeable position to be in, locked up in a fort among a hostile soldiery, with an excited swarm of barbarians without; but we made the best of things, and settled ourselves on the cushions which had been spread in the gateway, waiting till coffee should be served. But speech was impossible, for the disturbances outside increased, and the Governor, Mohammed Gad, and the *zaptiehs* were continually running outside beating the people off with their sticks. Outside we could hear the women wailing and hounding the men on, and at last Colonel Warren considered it time to do a little shouting himself. So he commenced to harangue the Governor in a loud

voice, pointing out that if we met with any evil not one stone would be left upon another in the castle or houses; that though the people might not suffer, the Governor and his *zaptiehs* could not possibly ever be employed again; that they would be outcasts among the Bedouin, who hated them; that Mohammed Gad would cease to be sheik over his tribe, and that his tribe would lose the care and lucrative custody of the Hadj pilgrims. These threats were direct home-thrusts to all those in the castle; and they made a final dash outside, beat the excited crowd indiscriminately all round, locked the gates of the fort, and begged us to come into an inner room in the court out of the noise, where we could talk. We found there were some very good chambers built round the court-yard; and into one of these we were conducted. A large piece of matting was brought in and laid on the floor; and on this we sat in a circle, with the Governor, Hassan Effendi, Mohammed Shedîd, and Mohammed Gad. A large dish, about three feet in diameter, was now deposited in the centre of the matting, piled up with *talaf* (rice boiled in *gieh*) with pieces of meat interspersed. Before commencing our repast a ewer and basin were brought to us for washing our hands; and now each one of us, towel over knees, approached within arm's length and dipped our hands into the dish. Our host tore up the meat for us with his fingers, and put tit-bits in front of each. The proper method of feeding is for each to mould the rice into a cake with the hand, and then jerk it into the open mouth; but most of us were novices, and could only eat in a very slovenly fashion. The meat on these occasions is always very nicely cooked, and appetising; it is boiled and spiced, and probably cooked over a very slow fire. We hoped that while we were eating some conversation would

ensue; for our Bedouin had ascertained absolutely nothing during the night, and we had not advanced one step towards learning anything of the missing party. Hassan Effendi had, however, ascertained during the previous night that the Governor was in possession of an important letter, though whether he could be induced to produce it was uncertain. There was still the possibility that Professor Palmer's party might be prisoners in the castle where we were; nay, might be even within hearing of our words, and we kept keenly on the watch to see if there were any signs of our countrymen's presence.

When we had eaten sufficiently we gave place to others, and while they were feeding, Colonel Warren turned on our host and demanded the reason why he had refused to give him any information about Professor Palmer's party; insisting that it was quite certain that he knew all about them, and telling him that he would suffer severely if he did not assist us. Colonel Warren had a theory that the best time for brow-beating an Arab host is just after he has fed you; when he thinks you ought to be satisfied with what you have eaten, and when he is himself a little gorged and unable to resist your importunities. On this occasion the onslaught was successful; our host was taken aback by the sudden attack upon him, and began to assert his readiness to assist in anything in accordance with the orders of the Governor of Suez. He was at last induced to admit that he had received a letter from Nackl, whereupon Colonel Warren insisted that this was only a further proof that he was an accessory to the imprisonment of Professor Palmer: eventually, to prove his innocence, he produced, with much mystery, the letter written to him by the Governor of Nackl—a letter which proved to be of the greatest importance, though, alas! it completely destroyed our hopes that

we should ever see our missing countrymen alive. This letter contained most interesting details concerning the party we were in search of, and was the more to be valued as it was clearly written without any conception that it would ever fall into the hands of the English. At first a suspicion arose that it might have been fabricated in the night; but everything pointed to its genuine character, and moreover it had on it the Governor of Nackl's seal and the official number.

It must be conceded that it is a very temperate letter, if we take the people's view that they were right to defend their own against the Christians who were attacking them. The people of Akabah were told they were not to fire first, and that they were not to kill if they could help it, but only to take prisoners. But in any case they were to fight in defending their own. A more reasonable and proper instruction could not have been given, had the Governor of Nackl been a European officer instead of a pronounced Arabist. Again, this letter, though it implicated the Shedîds, as accessories after the act, shows them in a very favourable light as not wishing to kill. Evidently they had said to the Bedouin "You were wrong to kill the party, you should have sent them as prisoners to us at Cairo." All this was brought to a focus afterwards; at present, the one startling piece of news confronted us. The missing men were dead! Yet though there seemed little ground for further hope, there was still a chance that the Governor of Nackl might be mistaken, that he had been misinformed, and that they might still be alive; and the palpably exaggerated tone of the letter, which turned Captain Foote's landing at Tor into the disembarkation of 500 soldiers, gave colour to the hope that it was so. Accordingly, Colonel Warren, though

feeling the almost certainty of their deaths, determined that the off-chance of their survival must not be neglected, and he must still act exactly as though they were still alive. For might not some of them have escaped, even if others were killed? Might they not have saved Sheik Abdullah (Palmer) as an old friend, while sacrificing the rest?

The following is the translation of the letter written on 27th of Showal (September 9th), and delivered at Akabah a few days afterwards.

We let you know that on the 11th day of Showal we appointed a Bedoui to carry the mail. He soon reached Ismailia, where he learnt that the English Christians had attacked the Bedouin who were near Ismailia, when they were much in need of water, the Sweet-Water Canal being blocked so that no water could go from Ismailia to Suez. Then at night the English attacked the Bedouin, who ran away and informed Arabi Pasha about it. So he came from Kafr Dowar with many troops, and attacked the enemy. He captured all their guns and arms, made many prisoners, and destroyed Ismailia. The Christians of that place and about Suez are much excited and afraid. This is all we have learnt from the two soldiers who were ordered to go through and could not. So they came back on the night of the 25th Showal.

But as regards the three Christians who were going to the fort of Nackl, accompanied by Metter Sofia, one of the Sofia tribe, they were killed by the son of Abu Mershed, one of the sheiks of the tribes that live at Wadi Sadr, and they never arrived here.

We received news from the Sheik of Tor that a man-of-war came down to Tor with 500 soldiers, and he could not come to Nackl as the Christians now are found in a very bad state.

My only object in writing to you is to desire you to be careful about the fort (Akabah), and to inform the Bedouin that they should not be far away from the fort, but always be ready for the enemy and not to be afraid. I hope God will permit that you are not found wanting. If any men-of-war come in your direction, do not fire on them; but if men go on shore, take hold of them by hand, and if they fire, fire at them in return. Let me know what is going on in your place. Don't be afraid. Don't wonder because the Moslems are victorious by the grace of God.

When Abu Shedid learnt that the Christians whom I spoke of were killed, he informed his Bedouin in writing that if they see any Christians, they should get hold of them and send them to him in Cairo.

Till now we have not received any instructions from Cairo. But as regards the four camels . . . .

(Here follows some business matters, which do not concern this narrative.)

There was considerable discussion before our host would allow this letter to be copied; but eventually he handed it over to us, and accepted a certified copy in its stead. We tried to get some information as to who Abu Mershed might be, and as to the locality of Wadi Sadr, &c., but could learn little, for no one admitted knowing anything about the country.

At mid-day we took the Governor and five of his *zaptiehs* to see the *Eclipse*. They inspected the ship with great wonder, and especially admired the guns for use in the tops. In the afternoon, when we went on shore again, we found that the townspeople and Bedouin had much quieted down. Sketches were made of the fort and town, and we examined the method of collecting water. The drainage from the hills percolates through the sandy soil, and runs on to the beach just above the level of the sea, so that by digging down a few feet abundant fresh water can be obtained; but if the hole is made too deep, the water is quite salt.

Having now gained all the information we were likely to obtain at Akabah, Colonel Warren commenced to arrange for the future, so that the Governor of Akabah and neighbouring sheiks might assist our operations in the desert. The Governor said that his jurisdiction did not extend far beyond the fort, and declared that he could not trust a single man at Akabah, not even to take a letter to Nackl, they had all so thrown in their lot with Arabi.

We now turned to Mohammed Gad, a fine, grizzly-haired Bedoui of commanding aspect. The sheik said little, but when he did speak he spoke as one in authority. He wore on his head a rich silk *kefiyeh*, and sported in his girdle a gorgeously embossed pair of *tabunjas* (horse pistols). He evidently considered himself immeasurably

superior to the Governor of Akabah, and, indeed, the contrast in the appearance of the two men would well justify the assumption; for the rugged appearance of the old sheik looked to great advantage beside the French polish of the little Egyptian soldier—*kefiyeh* against *fez*, the flowing robes of the Bedoui against the blue-cloth uniform of the soldier, sabre and pistol against sword, sandals against those modern abominations of the Continent, patent-leather "jemimas."

Mohammed Gad was chief sheik of the Alawîn, a branch of the Haiwatât. He had a bad name for cruelty and lawlessness—a name which his tribe shared with him. We, however, can only speak of him with affection and respect; he was such a delightful contrast to the half-civilised Arab, so much more English in his ideas. He proved himself most useful to us, for he was shrewd enough to see that we were not to be trifled with, and there is little doubt that his influence among the Bedouin and the people of Akabah at the time of our visit went far to avert bloodshed during our negotiations. He seemed quite certain that the Governor of Nackl's letter could be relied upon, though he asserted that he himself had not otherwise heard of the murder, which he characterised as a "shame" and a breach of faith. It was pointed out to him that it was a case by which the Bedouin had forfeited their claim to have their word respected: whereat he retorted that they could not all be held answerable for the bad faith of a few; that there were good and bad in all races, and all the Bedouin were not like Metter Sofîa. He blamed Metter Sofîa for Palmer's untoward end, and it is curious that in all parts of the desert this same view prevailed. The Bedouin most logically looked upon the man who betrayed the party as more guilty than those

who actually committed the murder. Mohammed Gad most solemnly declared that he would not allow any of the culprits to pass through his country; and offered to find out all about the circumstances of the murder and send us word over land.

Before we left the Governor asked for a testimonial as to how he alone had upheld the Khedive's authority at Akabah during the war. Colonel Warren did not see his way to going thus far, but promised that he would let it be known with what readiness the Governor had sacrificed his colleague of Nackl, by giving up his letter in order to clear himself. It was now getting late in the evening, and the Akabese again began, under cover of the approaching darkness, to get disagreeable—wanting to know what we were waiting for, and crowding roughly round our party. As we had now completed our arrangements we went down to the boat, where we found three or four Arabs who asked if we would take them to Suez, from whence they had fled at the beginning of the war. We had no room in our boat, but promised to send ashore for them in the morning. After this we took leave of our friends of Akabah, and went on board the *Eclipse*.

A boat was put off at 7 a.m. next morning for those who wished to be taken to Suez, but they had all changed their minds, and instead of any passengers excuses were sent—some were too ill to come, and others could not be found. We left our anchorage at 8.30 a.m., arriving at Dhahab in the afternoon. Here we again landed, as the *Eclipse* anchored here for the night, and we could see on the beach four or five Bedouin, with whom we wished to converse. However, before we could get ashore they bolted, leaving only a simple fisherman, who knew about nothing but fish. We walked on to some palm-trees a mile and a

half up the coast; but only found there a few camels, and a boy who roared and screamed whenever he was asked a question. All we could gather was that the people there were of the M'saineh, a branch of the Towâra, and a very inoffensive race. Dhahab will probably always continue a village on account of its fresh water and good anchorage.

We left again early in the morning and arrived at Suez on October 14th. Here we found that the East Indian Squadron had left, and H.M.S. *Carysfort* of the Mediterranean Fleet had taken its place. The *Carysfort* was commanded by Captain Stephenson, now Senior Naval Officer at Suez, whom Colonel Warren at once visited to report our proceedings. Telegrams were sent home stating the little prospect that remained of finding the party alive; but as there was still a chance of the survival of one or more, all arrangements were to be made with a view to their succour and assistance.

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO SUEZ. THE HAIWATÂT SHEIKS. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EXPEDITION INTO THE DESERT. SUALEM ABU FARAG. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE EGYPTIAN SHEIKS. ARRIVAL OF MÛSA NUSÎER. GUARANTEES SAFETY OF COLONEL WARREN AND PARTY: ALIGÂT WITNESSES. THE OBJECT OF GOING INTO THE DESERT.

DURING our absence at Akabah, Burton had got on with the preparations for the desert expedition. The Bedouin were fast arriving, in accordance with our requisition to Riaz Pasha; and some thirty of them, with their camels, were already camped on the fringe of the desert outside Suez. Colonel Warren had arranged that the men as they arrived should have their various camping-grounds pointed out to them; and the Egyptian Government had to supply them with rations. The provision of stores for one hundred and fifty camels and their riders, being no small matter, the officials of Suez soon showed more interest in our proceedings than they had up to this time.

Raoulf Pasha, the Governor of Suez, was ill; and Reschid Bey, who was acting in his place, proposed that the new Governor of Nackl should start at once for his government, taking with him the grain for the pilgrims and the year's rations for the soldiers. As there was no escort to send with them, and as the Governor of Suez's messenger to Nackl had been stripped and otherwise

ill-treated a short time before by the desert Bedouin, it seemed rather a venturesome course to adopt, and Hassan Effendi said he would rather wait till he could be escorted by our party.

Colonel Warren soon had occasion to talk to the Egyptian sheiks. He told the Shedîds that they had been at Suez now ten days, and had not brought him one scrap of information. The letter of the Governor of Nackl was shown them, implicating their family in the fanatical dealings of the desert Bedouin with Christians. They urged that they had been unable to do anything in the matter, as the Bedouin of the desert denied their authority. This, in the face of their proposal to go into the desert with one hundred and fifty men, to take by force those prisoners we required, was palpably ridiculous; and they were warned that they were expected to show greater energy in the matter, or an adverse report about them would be sent to the Government at Cairo.

As the number of the Bedouin increased, Colonel Warren found great difficulty in organising them into a workable body. Altogether, the party would include about fifteen different sheiks, and it was impractical that all these should act independently on their own responsibility. We naturally looked to Saad Shedîd to control the whole of them, but he pleaded that he was too young to give orders to men so much his senior. Finally, the Bedouin were divided into three parties, according to the districts they belonged to, and a separate sheik was made responsible for each party. These three divisions were:—

1. Haiwatât, Ayeîdi, Bîli, Maâsi — From the Kalyûb district.

2. { Tumeilât / Nofiât } From the Shurkîa district.
3. Terebîn From Gîzeh.

It was difficult to see how any combined action could be expected from this heterogeneous body, and there were special circumstances which increased our difficulties. There was actually an active blood-feud between the Terebîn and the tribes of Ayeîdi, Bîli, and Maâsi—these tribes having formerly lived to the east of the Canal, whence they were driven by the Terebîn, who are a very powerful tribe. During the war, in the intervals of opposing our troops, this blood-feud had been actively carried on, chiefly by the Maâsi, a very warlike people; and they had more than once crossed the Canal and made incursions into the desert, driving off all the camels and flocks they came upon, and then retiring to their fastnesses beyond the Attica range of mountains, where they were pretty safe from similar incursions, being more directly under the eye of the Government. The hostility of the sheiks when they first came in council together was therefore intense, and it needed the tightest hold over them to produce anything like combined action.

On October 17th there arrived three important men: Sualem Abu Farag, one of Shedîd's head-men, M'dackle, the head camel-driver that accompanied Palmer's party, and Ode Ismaili, the sheik of the Aligât. It may here be mentioned that the Aligât are one of the Towâra subdivisions, over all of which Mûsa Nusîer presides, and it was from the Aligât that Palmer got his camels and drivers; thus, Ode Ismaili was M'dackle's sheik.

Sualem Abu Farag had been actively engaged during the war. He had been in command of the Bedouin called out by Arabi to cover Cairo from the expected

advance of the Indian Contingent from Suez, and he was Shedîd's right hand in the desert. His authority appeared to be acknowledged by all parts of the Haiwatât tribe, east, as well as west of the Canal; and we came to the conclusion that he had been only lately in the desert thwarting our endeavours at opening up communication with the Bedouin. He came into our hands owing to the vigilance of some soldiers of the Indian Contingent at Nefichi, where he was made prisoner on account of some irregularity in his papers, as he was attempting to pass from Egypt into the desert east of the Canal. This man, of lithe, active frame, and somewhat sullen demeanour, was a person of some importance, and it soon became evident that through him the Shedîds were playing a very double game. It was recognised by all the Bedouin that, as Shedîd's lieutenant, during the war, Sualem had done his utmost to stir up hostility to the Christians, and that he was a man of authority over, if not actual sheik of, the very Haiwatât who had attacked Palmer's party; and here he was, sent to join our expedition for the solution of the mystery which enshrouded Palmer's disappearance, and to exact penalties of the guilty parties! The Shedîds professed to distrust Sualem, and got permission to keep his son in detention as hostage for his good behaviour while he was with us in the desert, contemplating, apparently, that at some future time Sualem might make a convenient scape-goat to save themselves by; while Sualem secretly told Colonel Warren that the Shedîds were throwing obstacles in our way, but that he would engage to catch any Bedouin we wanted.

Rather an amusing incident connected with Sualem occurred at this time. We were at Government House, and Consul West was reading out a list of those people

whom Colonel Warren desired to be brought in, in order that the various sheiks might take note of the names. At an early period in the preparation of the list Sualem Abu Farag's name had been entered, as he was a sheik of the *barra* Haiwatât—the Haiwatât east of the Canal—some of whom were present at the attack on Palmer. When Sualem heard his name read out, there was considerable embarrassment noticeable in his face and in the faces of the other sheiks present, each of whom wondered whose turn would come next. Mr. West, however, not being conversant with all the details of the evidence, and seeing the man before him who was required, with the other criminals, was on the point of making him a prisoner when, much to Sualem's relief, Colonel Warren interfered, intimating that for the present Sualem could remain at large.

The evidence of the Aligât Bedouin was useful to us in correcting a tendency, which the Shedîds lost no opportunity of increasing, to throw the responsibity for the outrage on Palmer on the Towâra. This aspect of the case was strengthened by the prolonged absence of Mûsa Nusîer, who had been expected at Suez for some considerable time, and whose backwardness in presenting himself might plausibly be adduced as evidence of his complicity in the crime.

On October 18th an influential old sheik, Abu Sarhan of the Terebîn, arrived from Gîzeh, and immediately came in for a good deal of reproach from the other sheiks, whose tribes were not directly implicated in the attack on Palmer. They seemed to think it a good opportunity of showing their discontent and determination not to do the work required of them. Some wanted to do one thing and some another. The Nofiât wanted to escort the new Governor and the supplies to Nackl, and leave the matter

of Palmer's disappearance to those tribes implicated; and the tribes implicated professed to have no influence with their brethren across the Canal. Others, like the Maâsi, Bîli, and Ayeîdi, contented themselves with protesting at being brought out on a service which had nothing to do with them or their country. Raoulf Pasha took their part and said "Let those sheiks who have men on the list of those implicated go in search of their men, while the others go back to their homes." Colonel Warren, however, objected to any whittling down of the expedition, but insisted that all should go to Nackl to instal Hassen Effendi in his command.

On October 19th Mûsa Nusîer at last arrived at Suez. His coming was opportune, as the expedition was ready to start; and it was palpable to all that unless Colonel Warren went justice would not be done, but the Bedouin would combine for the purpose of closing the inquiry as expeditiously as possible, by removing all trace of the crime from our reach, and perhaps inventing a story and providing scape-goats, in accordance with many a like precedent in the history of Eastern government. Mûsa, however, at once engaged to safe-conduct Colonel Warren and his staff in the desert, and the way was thus cleared for an early start.

Mûsa, sheik of the Towâra sheiks, was a fine specimen of a Bedoui; and, in some respects, was not unworthy of the name of the great Law-giver, who led Israel through the desert. Although having little executive power over his tribe, which is a weak one compared with others in the desert, there was probably no sheik whose safe-conduct was likely to be more generally respected than Mûsa's. In appearance he was tall and stately, of from 40 to 50 years of age, and his person conspicuous by the absence of the weapons

which generally bedeck a Bedoui chieftain. In council, although the representative of the poor Towâra only, he bore a preponderating influence, which was due to his known probity, good judgment, and moderation. He had more than once suffered imprisonment for his tribe, in the course of his opposition to Government in their misgovernment of the Bedouin; and several times he had succeeded in his advocacy and been the instrument of the withdrawal of some unjust burden from his people. During the ferment in the desert caused by the revolt of Arabi, Mûsa succeeded with skilful felicity of purpose in maintaining the neutrality of his people; so that while to the Arabs, Towâra and Christians were almost as one category, to the English little or no advance was made.

Mûsa Nusîer explained his tardy arrival by saying he had had much trouble with his own people on account of fanatical emissaries of the Haiwatât tribe; they having endeavoured to stir up the Towâra to sack Tor and massacre the Christians there and at Mount Sinai.

A true father of his people, his abilities were at once required to defend the Aligât tribe, on whom the Shedîds were endeavouring to throw the responsibility of the attack on Palmer. Mûsa at once threw his energies into the work, and by his influence over Ode Ismaili and the Aligât camel-drivers, these men were made to speak out much more freely than they had before. The story which we had heard from Salâmi, Palmer's camel-driver, was substantiated by this fresh evidence; and, except for offering no resistance to the attacking party, little blame could be attached to the Towâra for their conduct in relation to Palmer's untoward end.

Ode Ismaili stated that he refused to go with Palmer

more than once, when Palmer was trying to find camels to start with from Suez; but, notwithstanding the sheik's hanging back, the discipline of his tribe was so lax that several Aligât were engaged by Palmer as camel-drivers. We obtained from Ismaili, who was of a very excitable temperament, a curious account of Palmer's death, which, although hearsay, and painted in somewhat high relief, represents very nearly what actually occurred. This account was given at Government-House, where Colonel Warren happened one day to be examining the witnesses, contrary to his usual custom of conducting the examination, in a private room at the Suez Hotel; and, although we had tried, with success up to this time, to keep all the details of the massacre from getting into the public prints, we failed on this occasion, and this account was spread about all-the-world-over. In it was described how "Palmer and his companions were taken to a very steep place in the mountains, hard-by to some water, and there their captors gave them the choice of being thrown over the precipice, or shot. Palmer (Sheik Abdullah, as the Bedouin called him), seeing they were surely to die, stretched his arms towards heaven, and, calling down the vengeance of the Almighty on their cruel captors, jumped over the cliff." It is exceedingly probable that such an appeal was made by Palmer, although this description of it was not substantiated by any other witness; but it is easy to understand that the recollection of such an act would be unpalatable to a Moslem, viewing, as he must have done, the retribution that was overtaking the participants in Palmer's death—retribution which approached with slow, measured steps, as under the hand of the Almighty, from Whom there was no escaping until the pursuing hand

were stayed—retribution exacted by Christians, from Moslem Bedouin, for acts contrary to the Mohammedan religion and to Bedoui tradition.

With the assistance of Mûsa Nusîer the location of Wadi Sadr was at last satisfactorily determined, and the waters on that route to Nackl ascertained. It was unfortunate in this respect that we had not with us a good series of books which refer to this part of the world, as the position of Wadi Sadr might then have been more easily decided. However, our many inquiries were not thrown away, and Sualem Abu Farag and the Shedîds were now, by means of them, incorrectly under the impression that, by feigning ignorance of the place, they had succeeded in veiling from us the position of this all-important *wadi*.

Mûsa Nusîer having provided camels for our use, a contract was drawn up and signed in the presence of the Governor of Suez, making him responsible for our safe-conduct; and the Bedouin were sent off to Ayun Mûsa, where we were to join them on the morrow by sea.

The objects, that the expedition into the desert was to achieve, have already been detailed; the purposed plan of action was as follows:—We were to go straight to Nackl with our whole force of Bedouin, and instal Hassan Effendi safely in his seat of government, remitting the ex-governor under escort for safe-conduct to Suez. At Nackl, Colonel Warren was to divide his forces into two parts—one, of eighty men, under Sualem Abu Farag, would go and bring in the suspected persons of the Haiwatât and Terebîn; the other, under Mûsa Nusîer, would go after Metter Sofîa and his nephew of the Lehewât tribe. Orders were given to the new

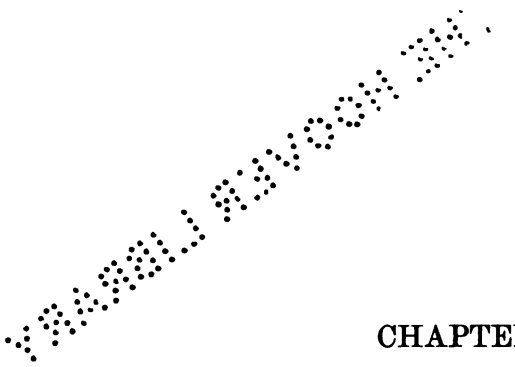
Governor of Nackl to give us every assistance, and letters were written to Sheik Misleh (Amîr of the Tîyahah) asking his help to secure Metter Sofîa. Before starting, the sheiks of the expedition were again summoned before the Governor and informed by him what was to be done, and several of the elder sheiks were given over into custody, to be kept until the expedition should return in safety. The Consul then harangued the sheiks, many of whom were plaintively urging the impossibility of their doing what was required of them, without stirring up feuds which would bring trouble on their heads for generations to come. He told them they had come down to do this business, and to catch the men that were required; and if they could not do it with their present numbers they must get another hundred men to help them, or a thousand if necessary; but do it they must. Justice had to be satisfied, and the stain on Bedoui hospitality wiped away by the delivering-up of the perpetrators of the crime to suffer the just penalties of the law.

With the despatch of the sheiks to join their parties at Ayun Mûsa, we felt that we were drawing close to the solution of the mystery which we had so far been unable satisfactorily to dispel; and the change from perpetual examination and cross-examination of unwilling witnesses in the baking temperature of a Suez autumn, to a life of action in the desert, could not be otherwise than inviting. It has often been remarked that it was a foolhardy enterprise to put ourselves in the power of those very men who had been fighting us a few weeks before, and to follow Palmer's party bent on an avenging errand, which we could only carry out by the help of the friends of the

very men we were to exact vengeance of. It would have been easy, said the critics, to have tumbled us over the same cliff that Palmer died at, or to have shot us, and brought back our bodies as killed in fighting against the desert Bedouin; and the sands of the desert may be made to close behind a party, leaving no trace of its course, as readily as do the waves of the sea. Such theorising is all very well, and can be applied to other incidents. When Gordon rode into the hostile slave-dealer's camp, some hours before his troops could arrive, he may have been doing a most foolish thing judged by all ordinary standards and precedents; but Gordon had counted the cost, and was satisfied that the object to be attained was worth the risk. In our case we had also to count the cost, and Colonel Warren had amply insured our safety, for, escorted as we were by Nile Bedouin under the great Sheik Shedîd's representative, great trouble would have been brought on the Bedouin in the case of anything untoward happening to us. In addition to this, Colonel Warren exhibited a personal ascendency over the Bedouin that triumphed over all minor difficulties—an ascendency due not so much to a happy way of treating them, such as Palmer relied upon, but based on a rigid straightforwardness,* an absolute rectitude of conduct, backed by the prestige of the lately-conquering Power and the support of the

* The opinion of Lady Hester Stanhope, given in the pages of "Eothen," is noticeable in this connection. Her ladyship, than whom no one was better acquainted with the Bedouin of these parts, says:—"A downright manner, amounting even to brusqueness, is more effective than any other with the Oriental; and that amongst the English of all ranks and all classes, there is no man so attractive to the Oriental—no man who can negotiate with them so effectively—as a good, honest, open-hearted, and positive naval officer of the old school."

re-established Government. This ascendency converted the rude sons of the desert into easy tools, unwilling though they were, and even produced in them a fellow-feeling. "Were these not Palmer's kin come to avenge his blood? Blood must be satisfied, for Abdullah and his companions were not killed in battle, and he was justified in calling on Heaven to avenge them." Such might have been their thoughts—thoughts well adapted to compel attention in the mind of a fatalistic Arab.



CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE FROM SUEZ. AYUN MÛSA. THE SEARCH-EXPEDITION STARTS. WADI SADR. ARRIVAL AT SITE WHERE PALMER'S BAGGAGE WAS PLUNDERED. IBN MERSHED ESCAPES. SOME CAPTIVES. CAMP AT TUSSET SADR. EVIDENCE OF SALÂMI. DISPOSITIONS FOR THE MORROW. UNRELIABLE CHARACTER OF OUR BEDOUIN. DISCOVERY OF THE REMAINS OF PALMER AND HIS COMPANIONS. START FOR NACKL. JOURNEYING ACROSS THE DESERT ON THE TÎH. MISSION OF SUALEM ABU FARAG.

THE morning of October 20th was spent very busily, packing up and seeing the numerous visitors who called to wish us God-speed. Governor Raoulf Pasha was among the number, and the interpreter being busily engaged in preparations for our start, Colonel Warren had the task of entertaining His Excellency; and, as the Pasha spoke a mixture of Arabic and Turkish, which was quite unintelligible to us, the task was a somewhat difficult one. The Pasha having bowed himself out of the hotel, and our baggage being put on board a felucca, we were ready to start soon after noon; intending to sail over to Ayun Mûsa, whither our Bedouin had gone before, and were now marking with a black line the glaring desert in the distance beyond the harbour. However, the wind was unfavourable, and there was nothing for it but to wait until one of Captain Stephenson's launches, the *Polly*, was sent to tow us down the harbour. The launch having

arrived, we got on board our felucca, all except Ode Ismaili and Mûsa Nusîer, who were to have gone with us, but had been nowhere to be found for some time; and about 5 p.m. we started, pounding away down the harbour after the snorting little *Polly*, in company with Captain Stephenson in his launch. Arrived at the entrance of the Canal we saw a party of Bedouin on the far shore; and, thinking it might be some of our men, Colonel Warren got into Captain Stephenson's launch, which drew less water than the *Polly*, and went off to see. The party turned out to be Mûsa Nusîer and Ode Ismaili with some Towâra, who, not knowing exactly what they were to do, were waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up. Fortunately the right thing did turn up in the person of our Chief, and they were soon packed off to Ayun Mûsa to be ready to start with the caravan next day.

Proceeding down the anchorage of Suez past the light-ship, we were at last able to get a fair wind into the quarantine pier at Ayun Mûsa; so we said good-bye to Captain Stephenson, cast off the *Polly*, and away she went puffiting back to H.M.S. *Carysfort*. The sun had set, and we could just see through the dusk the dark line of palm-groves at Ayun Mûsa; and this fading away soon left nothing of the land in front of us visible, except the fires of the quarantine camp, and our Bedouin's bivouac.

The felucca sped across the waters, driven by the freshening evening breeze, and in enforced idleness we sat and smoked, speculating on the course of events before us. In our quest for information about the business we had in hand, we had heard much of the country we were now going to enter for the first time, but the testimony of our informants was obscured by contradiction. Was it an arid

desert, which the fringe bordering on the Canal had often shown to us—a desert with waters small and far between, and therefore supporting a sparse population; or was it a fat land, with a company of fifty thousand fighting men? If the latter (and Palmer, than whom there was no better authority, had said so), where would we be with our party of one hundred and fifty Bedouin, impressed into our service by the orders of the newly-established Government, and possessing neither cohesion, discipline, nor love for their leaders?

About 8 p.m., as the moon rose over the land ahead of us, we arrived at the quarantine pier. Here we found Mûsa Nusîer and Ode Ismaili, and, acting in accordance with a pre-arranged plan, Colonel Warren sent back Ode Ismaili in the boat to Suez, as soon as our belongings were unloaded. Ismaili carried with him a letter to the Governor of Suez, requesting that the bearer be made a prisoner until we returned from the desert. Colonel Warren had decided to keep Ode until all the camel-drivers of his tribe, that accompanied Palmer on his last journey, had come in and given their testimony. There had always been something suspicious about this man's behaviour, and Mûsa Nusîer himself concurred in the desirability of detaining him at Suez while we were in the desert. As sheik of the Aligât he ought never to have allowed his men to go as camel-drivers with Palmer, when he had suspicions that the country was unsafe; especially as he had himself twice refused to go with Palmer. Although this man took no active part in the outrage, there was a very general feeling against him in the matter—a feeling which it was somewhat difficult to exactly account for, but which could not be disregarded.

Loading our baggage on Mûsa Nusîer's camels, we proceeded up the pier to the quarantine camp, where we selected a spot to pass the night. The quarantine officer offered us the use of his tents, which were then empty; but ten days before, a party of pilgrims, which had come up the Red Sea from Mecca, had occupied them, so we politely declined his hospitality, and, scraping a clean spot on the sand, settled down for the night in the open. Adam, our cook, was set to work to prepare our supper, and we overhauled our baggage and stores to see that nothing important was left behind. It requires a very old hand to cater for an expedition into the desert without leaving out a few necessaries, and therefore, it is always advisable to camp out on starting close to one's base of operations, from which, if necessary, things can be sent on after one. In our case we found ourselves deficient of an absolutely necessary article, a tin-opener, but were able to obtain one from the quarantine camp in exchange for a pot of marmalade.

After supper we lit our pipes and got into our blankets, for sand, on which we had bivouacked, gets very cold during the night; and after writing up our diaries and a few letters for home, were soon fast asleep. About two o'clock in the morning we were awakened by arrivals in the camp; these turned out to be Reschid Bey and an interpreter from Cairo, Josef Raad, whom Colonel Warren had sent for to join our party. Reschid Bey had been sent out by Raoulf Pasha, he being anxious about Ode Ismaili, who had not arrived at Suez when they started; and the Governor also wished to show the Bedouin that we had the support of the permanent Government. After some coffee and cigarettes Reschid Bey left to return to Suez, carrying with him our post-bag; and, left to

ourselves, we were soon asleep again, dreaming of home, precipices, and Bedouin.

In the morning we started off for Ayun Mûsa, where our Bedouin were encamped. At Ayun Mûsa there are some gardens situated upon sand-hills, slightly elevated above the surrounding country: on the summits of several of these hills are springs, wells, or pools of water, slightly brackish, but excellent for irrigating purposes; and round them are grouped palms and pomegranate-trees giving a very luxuriant shade. We visited the houses which had been looted by the Bedouin, but little damage had been done as far as we could see.

Our Bedouin, who were grouped round the water, were divided into small camps, under separate sheiks. Those from the Sharkîa district were under Hadj Mohammed Shedîd; those from the Khalyûb district under Mohammed Hassan of the Nofiât; while the Terebîn had Sheik Abu Sarhân at their head. Sualem Abu Farag occupied the position of free-lance; but he was looked up to as the man to whom, if any concerted fighting was to be done, the direction would naturally fall. In addition to the above, Mûsa Nusîer and his party of Towâra formed our own camp; and Hassan Effendi, with the convoy of supplies for the fort of Nackl, had his. The whole expedition numbered about three hundred and seventy men, with two hundred camels.

Some time was spent inspecting the different camps, in becoming acquainted with the capacity of the different units, and the preparations that they had made for the work in front of them. As long as they had been in Suez under the eye of the Government the Bedouin were very meek and amenable to discipline; but now in the desert they at once asserted a different mien, and Colonel Warren

had to reduce them roughly to their proper position. They appeared to think that we would be quite unable to arrange the details of the marches, and that we would place ourselves entirely in their hands to go when and where they liked: questions as to the road and country were

A HALT IN THE DESERT.

answered in an unwilling manner as having little to do with us, and there was apparent a consensus of intention to take things very easily.

The immediate destination of the expedition had been given out as Nackl, and the Bedouin had assumed that we should follow along the ordinary Hadj route, watering at Marbook about twenty miles from Suez. Colonel Warren, however, had determined to follow in Palmer's footsteps up Wadi Sadr, and early in the afternoon called the headsheiks together, and told them of his purpose. They at once threw difficulties in the way. "Wadi Sadr," they said "was a wild place, where they might all perish for want of water; the road was rough and little known, and it would be impossible to take the convoy of grain that way." Colonel Warren declined to allow the expedition to be divided into two parties, and insisted on an early start being made for Wadi Sadr. The sheiks, however, refused

to acknowledge that this route was practicable; so Colonel Warren gave orders for the camels to load up, and warning the sheiks that they must follow us or incur the anger of the Government, we started with Mûsa Nusîer on the road to Wadi Sadr. Sualem Abu Farag, the only man in the expedition who rode a horse, after a few minutes trotted up alongside of us, and we soon learnt that the whole caravan was in motion docilely following in our footsteps. That march we only did about ten miles, and bivouacked for the night in a little *wadi* which ran across our path, where Palmer also had made his first halt. This change of plan, whereby Colonel Warren was able to follow a route which the Bedouin did not credit us with knowing of—either in respect to the locality, capacity as a road for a heavy column, or for the water to be found on the route—proved very opportune to the success of our inquiry. In a few days the rain fell in this part of the country, washing away all traces that remained of the murder; thus we should have lost all the circumstantial evidence that we were actually enabled to obtain, if we had not insisted on going up Wadi Sadr.

It may here be of advantage to describe our party, at the head of which we may put ourselves—three Englishmen of a rather nondescript appearance, made up of corduroy-trousers, gaiters, flannel-shirts, any sort of coat, mushroom pith-hats, swords, revolvers, and very red faces. We had not yet learnt to discard our hats for the Bedoui head-dress, and cover ourselves during daytime with the goat-hair *abba*, which forms an excellent protection from the burning rays of the sun: these improvements came later with the teachings of experience.

Our interpreters, Selim Mosalli and Josef Raad, were both Syrians from Beyrout. They had been brought over

at the outbreak of the war by the Admiralty, to serve with the expeditionary forces in Egypt; and now that the war was over, were thinking, when we engaged them, of returning to their native land. Excellent linguists, speaking half-a-dozen languages each, both had previously been employed as dragomen to tourists, and were infinitely useful in the details of camp-equipment, and in arranging for travelling in the desert. Of a dark-skinned, handsome, brave, and hardy race, these men were well used to the Bedouin, and we had often to be thankful that we had got them instead of some poor Egyptian dragomen, who, from their feeble, down-trodden nature, are generally unsuitable for employment in transactions requiring nerve and *sang-froid.*

We also took with us two somewhat hybrid individuals—Ossad, a Persian merchant, who knew a good deal about the Bedouin, from whom he purchased turquoises, and who had been very useful to us at Suez during the progress of our inquiry; and Adam, our cook. This latter was of unknown nationality, and his appearance savoured of the Levantine from the Turkish provinces in Europe; he was always dirty, and dressed in a medley of Eastern and European cast-off clothing. This gentleman wanted a good deal of coaching in his duties, and we all assisted to teach him to cook, with the result that by the end of our first journey in the desert, he was tolerably competent. Adam always took his time, and of an evening, after arriving in camp, our mess was always served about an hour after the Bedouin were curled up asleep—they having fed their camels, made their bread, had supper, and the usual smoke round the camp-fire before turning in. We could stand this in the evening, but in the early morning, to start without our customary

chocolate and porridge, was a serious trial; and Adam had to be put through a course of early rising, which he triumphantly survived; and thenceforth long before the first streak of dawn illuminated the sky, we would realise in our slumbers the crackling of sticks under the pot, and know that Adam was practising his art for our benefit.

The rest of our party, except the new Governor of Nackl, Hassan Effendi, and his Nubian servant, were Bedouin, and as such need no description to English readers.

On the morning of the 22nd we started early, and, travelling over a succession of low sandy hills, arrived at Wadi Kahalîn about nine o'clock. On the march we were usually accompanied by Mûsa Nusîer and Sualem Abu Farag. Owing to the close relations between the latter and the men who attacked Palmer, we were always somewhat suspicious of his intentions towards us. A little wiry fellow, with small black eyes, and a determined look on his browned sedate face, we knew him for the greatest cut-throat and the most feared man among our retinue. Taciturn for an Eastern, he even dispensed with the ornate salutations current with the Bedouin, and showed by his behaviour that he was determined to impress us with his character as a man of action. As we approached each rise of the ground Sualem trotted off to the top, and sitting there on his little Arab steed, with rifle in hand, he made a fine picture of a scout, for our delectation.

We had hitherto followed accurately in Palmer's footsteps, halting at the two places he had. In fact, the desert offers so little facility for change of route, and the Bedouin are so familiar with their country and the way it has for centuries been travelled over, that, whatever the circum-

stances, the halting-places are rarely changed, although the road may be so little used as hardly to be tracked at all except by a Bedoui. After a short halt at Wadi Kahalîn we started again for Wadi Sadr, the entrance of which we could now plainly detect as it breaks the outline of Jebel Rahah—the name by which the Bedouin here style the mountains east of Suez, on the edge of the Tîh. This Tîh, or "Desert of the Wanderings," as it is sometimes termed in travellers' maps, is the central plateau of Arabia Petræa, at about the middle of which is Nackl. It is bounded on the south by a very marked escarpment,* oftentimes falling abruptly a thousand or more feet in one all but perpendicular scarp; and here and there, as in the case of Wadi Sadr, the scarp is broken away by a *wadi* which extends far into the plateau in rear, and the scarp runs back on either side. In the centre of the gap before us stood a mountain—Tel el Bisher—which we had seen continuously since leaving Ayun Mûsa, and which now stood towering over us as sentinel of the *wadi* which we were entering. From scarp to scarp the gap must, at its mouth, have a width of several miles; and thus, in this country, which has, and has had for many centuries, a very meagre rainfall, a vast notion is formed of the process of denudation, and the period of time through which it has to act. The limestone precipices, which form the most prominent feature of the scarps of Wadi Sadr, are everywhere carved and fluted in a marvellous way by Nature's processes, and resemble nothing so much as the stone

* This escarpment has by some been identified with the Shur of Scripture. It is probable, however, that the Desert of Shur was more to the north, and was so named from the line of fortifications which, at the time of the Exodus, protected Egypt on its north-eastern frontier.

reredoses of some of our Gothic cathedrals, or the clusters of pilasters and buttresses which adorn some of our more ornate exteriors.

About one o'clock we arrived at a spring, Ain Abu Jerad, where the Bedouin wished to halt. However, Colonel Warren had his reasons for not halting this time at the accustomed place, and we passed on, spreading out in

TEL EL BISHER.

extended order and sweeping up the *wadi* in search of any traces of the baggage, which we knew had been plundered close to this spring. Our search was quickly rewarded. First a piece of tin was found, then some broken wood and pieces of paper; and a mile from the spring we reached the spot where the baggage had been looted, and found the remains of a portmanteau, a sponge, an iron camp-fireplace, and several smaller articles. Here we found also a quantity of note-paper with envelopes of the flag-ship *Euryalus*, letters to Lieutenant Charrington, and a mutilated copy of

"Don Juan," with the following on the cover, "John Charrington, 1823." Following up the valley we found more paper, parts of maps, a Bradshaw's Guide, old newspapers, the peak of a forage-cap, two cakes of moist water-colour, and a bottle of essence of camphor. There was nothing, however, amongst all these articles that could be surely identified as belonging to either Gill or Palmer. Mounting our camels again—for our search had perforce been conducted on foot—we rode on, eagerly seeking for more signs of the missing party. There had often been retailed to us a story of a camel having been shot at the attack, and we hoped to find its remains to mark the place; but no camel was found, and at sunset we bivouacked in the *wadi* in an open place hemmed in on either hand by steep precipices.

The day had been a satisfactory one for the progress of our inquiry. The cameleers' story had been confirmed by the evidence of the looted baggage, and we might hope to be within easy reach of evidence of the fate of our missing countrymen. We were, however, in hostile country, close to where Palmer had been attacked, and could not be quite unapprehensive of our own position; so sending out some parties of Bedouin to look out and camp ahead of us, we chose a snug place for our night's resting-place under the overhanging rocks of one side of the *wadi*, which was here bounded by cliffs some fifty feet high.

Next morning the camp was roused before dawn for an early start. That morning is chiefly memorable to me by the kicking of Adam, and the porridge he was leisurely preparing, into the fire because our breakfast was not ready for us to eat. It rather startled Adam, but he had yet to learn many things, and he never failed to supply us with breakfast again.

Carefully searching for any vestiges of Palmer's party we made our way up the *wadi*. About ten o'clock we neared the water of Abu Rigem, about seventeen miles above Ain Abu Jerad; and here the road left the water-course to the north and crossed over some low hills. At this point we caught sight of a man about a mile off: he appeared to be trying to make his escape towards the hills beyond, and we immediately gave chase. Two more fugitives were seen, and our Bedouin were soon in full cry. Sualem Abu Farag on his horse, and the better-mounted Bedouin, rapidly out-paced us, for we were but tyros at the art of galloping our camels; and our pursuit taking us to the water of Abu Rigem, we dropt out of the chase to search for any more Bedouin who might be hiding in the underwood near the water. Our search was rewarded by the capture of an old man and several women; one of whom proved to be the wife of a Terebîn, Hassan Ibn Mershed, who had frequently been named to us as one of the principal men in the attack on Palmer. The other three Bedouin escaped, and much to our chagrin we learnt that one of them was Ibn Mershed himself. It appears that they had their guns with them, and fired several shots (the reports of which we heard) at our Bedouin who were following them, and who promptly gave up the pursuit. Ibn Mershed had heard of our proposed journey to Nackl, and, expecting we would go by the ordinary route, had come here with his flocks to be out of our way; thus we had taken him by surprise.

Our caravan was halted at the water, and Colonel Warren sent out the Bedouin to all sides to make any captives they could, while he examined the prisoners. The old man, whose name was Salâmi, was a cripple. He said he was the care-taker of the palm-trees, of which there

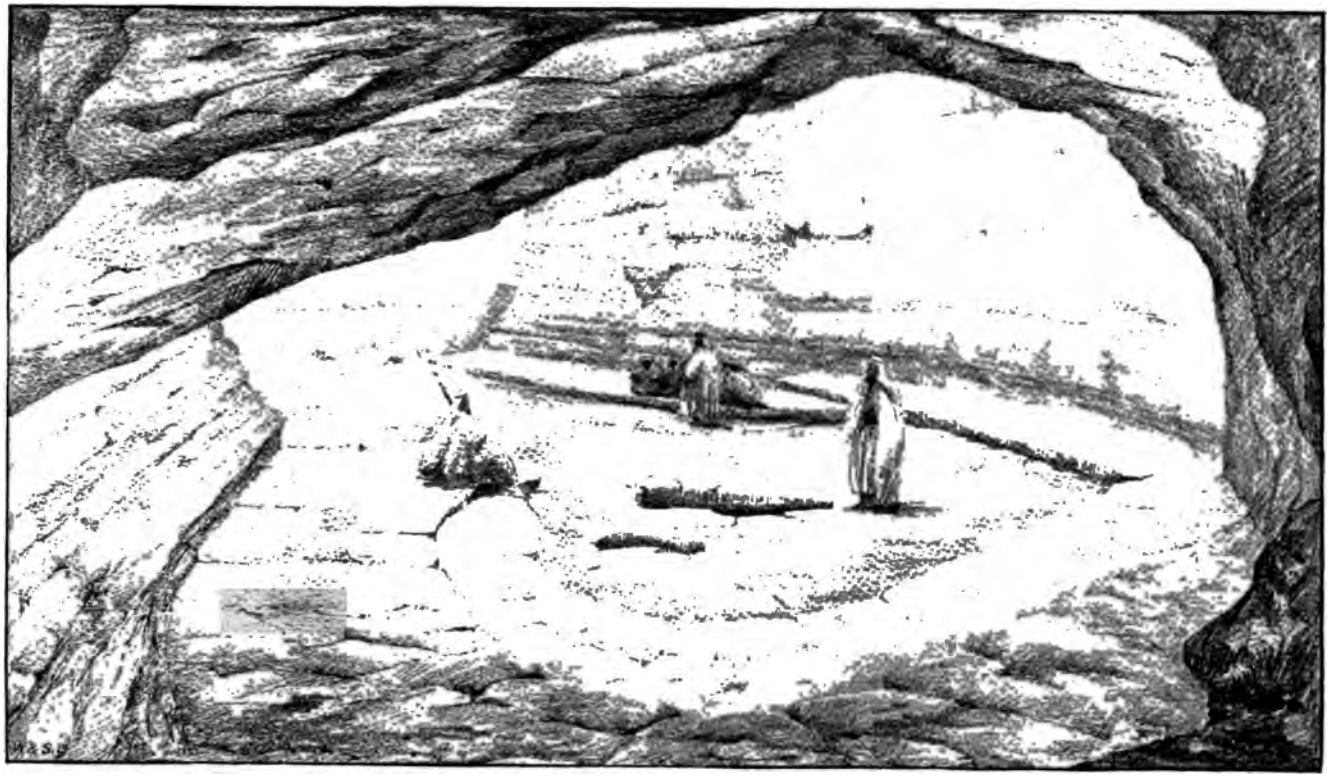
were several there. He was found in possession of a tobacco-pouch, marked "H. Charrington," which he asserted had been given him by Ibn Mershed. Amongst the hair-ornaments of Ibn Mershed's wife we saw a silver pencil-case. No information of importance was to be got from the captives, and when our parties returned from their fruitless pursuit of Ibn Mershed and his men, we decided to move to another water, some two and a half hours further up the *wadi*, where we should be less exposed to attack if Ibn Mershed were to gather his men and try to retake his wife by force. The conduct of our Bedouin had been most unsatisfactory, and gave us some anxiety at this time. We considered that they could, if they had so chosen, have captured Ibn Mershed, and their failure in this respect could only be attributed to bad faith. At the same time they appeared to be much concerned for their own safety, and to be only longing to return to their flesh-pots in Egypt. Taking our captives with us, we contiued our march up the valley to the water of Tusset Sadr. Here we found another fine water and more palms, and choosing a flat open site we bivouacked for the night.

During the evening, old Salâmi, who was of the Aligât tribe, and therefore under Mûsa Nusier's jurisdiction, was induced to speak out; and told us that he had heard Ibn Mershed and another Bedoui talking over the attack on Palmer and his subsequent murder. He surmised that the site of the murder could not be far away from the water of Abu Rigem, and thought that he might be able to find the spot if we wished to visit it. Later on in the evening, Salâmi's memory revived under the vivifying influence of the faithful Mûsa Nusîer; and he came to us again to say that he knew where the bodies of the white

men were, and that one had fallen into the water at the bottom of a gully.

To us who had been struggling on for so many days in this inquiry with the barest possible progress, the rapidity with which the mystery was now unfolding itself was sufficiently startling. However, the information demanded immediate action, and Colonel Warren decided to go and see the site of the murder at once; lest those Bedouin in our party (the Shedîds in particular) who were interested in burking the inquiry, should remove the bodies. Again, since the bodies had fallen into a gully, and the season of year had arrived when rain was expected, it was absolutely necessary to visit it at once, lest the rain should come and the gully be swept clean by a torrent before our arrival. There was some probability that we might be attacked if we visited the site of the murder, passing as we should have to do the water where we had surprised Ibn Mershed: so, to minimise this chance, and get rid of some of the disaffected and more troublesome of our escort, Colonel Warren gave orders for the despatch of a party of seventy men to a water half a day's journey to the east, with instructions to capture any Bedouin they might find there; while, with the remainder of our men, he intended to retrace his steps and visit the place of the murder.

Early next morning, October 24th, Colonel Warren sent off Sualem Abu Farag and his party of Bedouin. We then set out with a party of sixty men to visit the site of the murder, the Governor of Nackl and the rest of the Bedouin being left to defend the camp. Proceeding on our mission, we soon found our party of sixty reduced to about twenty-five, the rest having slinked away back to camp, being either too indolent or afraid to come on. Colonel Warren sent back for them, and we started again with about



CAVE AT SCENE OF MURDER, WHERE THE BEDOUIN HELD THEIR FINAL CONSULTATION BEFORE KILLING THEIR CAPTIVES.

fifty-five men. Mohammed Shedîd and four men were detached as a scouting party, to ride some distance in front of the main body, but as we neared the palm-trees of Abu Rigem, our scouts disappeared, and after some time wasted in searching for them, we continued our march without them. It was clear we could trust none of our men out of our sight, so Colonel Warren put two Bedouin in front, and held the rest of the party close together. Another woman was captured close to Abu Rigem, a Haiwatât, wife of a man named Nassier, and she was taken on with us.

We continued our march down the right bank of Wadi Sadr, which here follows a somewhat tortuous course, different from the way we had come up the day before. On leaving Abu Rigem, the valley began to narrow, with ledges shelving in on either side. The sides got steeper and steeper, until there was merely a camel-track along the ledge, with precipices above and below us—on our right to the cliffs above, on our left to the gully below. The gully was about twenty feet broad and fifty deep, with pools of water in places at the bottom; and the edges at the top so rounded off that it was with difficulty we could see down to the bottom. On we went till we reached a spot about six miles below Abu Rigem, where the ledge broadened out, making a cave in a re-entering angle; in the middle of which, in a cistern formed out of limestone-rock by the dripping of water from the roof above, was a pellucid pool of water. Salâmi tells us that the bodies were beneath us in the gully; but as we could see nothing of them from above, and we had had a long fast, we retired to the cave to lunch before commencing what we inferred would be a lugubrious and sickening task.

While we were lunching, shouts were heard from

below. Ascertaining the cause, we found that Mohammed Shedîd and our scouts had arrived at the same spot as we had, they having come up the gully from some miles below—*and this without any guide*, though they had professed all the while to know nothing about the country or the murder. Leaving Burton and Mosalli with the Bedouin to look after the ropes at the top, Colonel Warren and I were next lowered to the bottom of the gully, which was here forty-seven feet deep, and from ten to twenty feet wide, with precipitous sides. Below, we found the remains of our unfortunate countrymen—a skull, jaw-bone, numerous ribs and broken bones, much gnawed by wild beasts; a truss of a very small man, supposed to be Professor Palmer; two socks marked W. G. (W. Gill), with the feet still in them; and parts of socks and drawers marked H. C. and H. Charrington: also a pair of duck-trousers, with buttons marked with the name of a Bombay tailor; these latter were in such a condition that we burnt them. The bones were much scattered over the bed of the gully, where were pools of water and clumps of reeds; and on the ledge, and on the side of the gully, there were traces of blood, showing that one or more of the party must have been killed or wounded above. Never could a better place have been chosen for the concealment of the tragedy: after the first rain all trace of it would have been washed away from the gully beneath, and even on the sides, and above on the ledge, where the marks of the blood were, the rocks would have been washed clean, for there was here the bed of a little torrent that, after rain, courses down the side of the ravine and traverses the ledge from the above-mentioned cave to the gully.

The remains of the bodies were carefully collected

and placed in a case, provided for the purpose, for removal to England; and after sketching the gully we were drawn up again, and started off on the return-journey to camp, where we arrived at sunset and found all correct.

Little had we thought a week before to arrive at so rapid a solution of the mystery of Palmer's disappearance; and now with our sad burden before us, journeying on that last journey, which was finally to deposit it in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral—from the "Desert of the Wanderings" to the heart of Great Babylon—we could not but feel that our task was in part accomplished, and the question—"What now?"—recurred with force. Retribution was now the only end at which our efforts could aim. The circumstances of the crime must be unravelled, the assassins brought to book, and innocent blood be avenged. The Bedouin themselves, now that fanaticism was quenched by the triumph of our armies and the restoration of the Khedive's Government, hated and bemoaned the detestable action of their tribesmen; and, recognising the equity of the law—life for life—looked on with dread, but in a spirit of fatalistic expectancy, at the successive steps of an inquiry that was to close only with the exaction of the death-penalty.

Colonel Warren determined to march next day for Nackl, as it was inadvisable to remain long camped where we were. Once in the fort of Nackl, with Hassan Effendi installed as Governor, we should be in a secure position for prosecuting further research, and a formidable obstacle to the pacification of the desert would be removed.

During the night we were somewhat apprehensive of attack. Sualem's party had not returned, and might have got into difficulties on their mission; thus our fighting strength being reduced by about half its number, consider-

able inducement existed if the Bedouin were at all inclined to attack us. Each night we gathered our trunks and cases of stores around our sleeping-place, converting it into a little fort; and with the token of the results of surrender hard by, in the shape of the remains of Palmer and his companions, we might have made that little enclosure an unpleasant place to come near with any hostile intention. During our wanderings on this expedition the Bedouin constantly regaled us with their expectations of attack from the tribes of the desert, and we never neglected to take the utmost precaution we could to render ourselves secure against being rushed. Every night a belt of ground round our sleeping-place was cleared of obstacles, and we lay down side by side, with our rifles under our blankets, and revolvers, loaded in the last three chambers, fastened to our wrists. Our constant activity in the day-time precluded any attempt on our part to keep sentry-go at night, as we had done while in standing-camp at Tor; but we soon became extraordinary light sleepers, and I have oftentimes been awake at night looking up into the star-bespangled sky overhead, and noticed that not a camel could grunt or shift his position near us, or, indeed, not a movement take place anywhere in the camp, without "our Chief," who appeared to be sleeping hard, and *was* to all practical purposes, at once lifting his head and fixing the cause of the disturbance. Our precautions were, however, never destined to be tested by any overt attempt at treachery or violence, but we never shall know to what extent they succeeded in protecting us from sharing the fate of Palmer and his companions. Certainly we could not reckon on our escort; except for the faithful service of Mûsa Nusîer and half-a-dozen of his camel-drivers, we had nothing but ourselves to depend on, and until Colonel

Warren was thoroughly known, and had obtained the position of complete dominance over the desert Bedouin which he subsequently attained to, our position necessarily involved some risk.

Next morning Colonel Warren gave the order to strike camp and start for Nackl. The sheiks protested, but he was obdurate, and we started. The morning was, however, very misty, and after proceeding a little distance Colonel Warren called a halt and sent for the recalcitrant sheiks. They hotly urged the foolishness of moving on to Nackl without Sualem and his party. We might arrive there, they said, and find the tribes gathered, under the Governor of Nackl, to oppose us; and, cut off from the water, we should be in a very perilous position. Most of the Haiwatât had gone with Sualem on his raid, and the other tribesmen left with us objected to go on without the Haiwatât, who as a tribe were largely mixed up in the massacre—urging that they might by going on come to hostilities with the desert Bedouin, while the Haiwatât, on whom, if on anyone, the brunt of the whole matter should fall, would escape. Words ran very high, but under the influence of coffee and cigarettes, and our sneers and laughter, the sheiks were finally made to understand that, like it or not, Sualem or no Sualem, they would start after mid-day. So camp was again formed.

Early in the afternoon we loaded up and started again, winding up the slight depression, which was all that was left of Wadi Sadr, as it debouched on to the central plain. Passing the Calaat i Jeudi, a solitary limestone mountain in shape like the frustum of a cone, after several hours' march, we found ourselves on the Desert of the Tîh. The effect as one reaches this flat expanse is very remarkable. Instead of the varied rugosity of the

scenery to which our eyes had become accustomed, with its stern scarps and boulder-strewn water-courses, here an apparently level plain, covered with sun-blackened stones, stretched before us as far as the eye could see, and rising therefrom into the dazzling sky were the dim outlines of the mountain-peaks of Jebels Yeleg, Ihkrîm, and Bodîa. North of us were the mountains of Rahah, through which the Hadj route from Suez to Nackl passes; and to meet this route, where it debouches on to the plain, we now bent our course to the northward. Proceeding thus we crossed a number of shallow depressions, in which were dotted bushes of tamarisk and scrub: here we put up several hares, which were instantly chased by a crowd of Bedouin armed with guns and sticks and stones. Though the Bedouin are exceptionally fleet of foot, the hares generally got the best of them; but it was interesting to see the usually stoical Arabs entering into the excitement of the chase with all the exuberance of joy which, under similar circumstances, might be displayed by an English school-boy.

That night, after we had formed camp, the sheiks came to complain of the rations which had been provided for them by the Government. The Governor of Suez, seizing the opportunity to get rid of his old stock of provisions at the expense of the "pigs"—under which generic term he classed all the Bedouin of our escort—had sent with us a quantity of mouldy biscuit as rations for the men. The sheiks, having exhausted their private stock of flour, were reduced to sharing this biscuit with the men, and came up holding in their hands samples of the green cake full of maggots, complaining that their stomachs were full of worms. Colonel Warren at once examined the samples, and choosing the least repulsive piece, munched it with

self-evident gratification at its excellent flavour and appetizing qualities. The sheiks being nonplussed at this, the affair was soon turned into a joke, and they retired in excellent humour, seeing nothing for it but to make the best of things.

We had still no news of Sualem's party, and the Bedouin were now thoroughly alarmed, and throughout the night kept up a very efficient guard round the camp. This resulted in a somewhat amusing incident. One of our number being little inclined to sleep, straying somewhat away from the camp in the moonlight, was suddenly approached by one of the Bedoui sentries, who, bringing his Remington rifle to the shoulder, presented the muzzle at our friend, at the same time shouting some challenge in Arabic. The victim of this display of vigilance grasping the situation, but being somewhat deficient in his use of Arabic, cried out at once, "Damn you! Don't be a fool! Don't shoot!" However, the Bedoui remained motionless, with finger to trigger, the moon plainly revealing the precision of aim of the shining weapon. The situation was an uncomfortable one, and our companion, racking his vocabulary, succeeded in producing the pregnant sentence "Ana Inglîze"—in pigeon Arabic, "Me Englishman"—and to his infinite relief our guard lowered his rifle with the ejaculation "Wahad Kawadja."

On the 26th we continued our journey across the Tîh, and halting in the middle of the day were overtaken by six Terebîn of Sualem's party. They brought the news that Sualem had returned to our camp at Tusset Sadr, and, his men being somewhat fatigued, was resting there, intending to catch us up to-morrow. They gave us a graphic account of the dangers they had run in their mission. They had proceeded to the water to which we

had sent them, and there they had found some Bedouin, who had agreed to take them to the Arab camps in the hills. On their way there they fell into an ambush laid for them in a defile, and the hostile Bedouin opening fire upon them from the heights on either side. Sualem at once drew off his men as well as he could, but not before one man was wounded in the wrist by a slug.

Such was the tale they told. But we were somewhat sceptical as to its credibility, although next day, on the arrival of the main body, the wounded man was produced, and became urgent that we should cut out the slug from the fleshy part of the wrist, where it was embedded. However, whatever games Sualem had been playing, we had been successful in our own part of the work, having visited the scene of Palmer's death, and obtained, without incurring any opposition, evidence which was of the greatest importance; thus, whether Sualem had been in earnest or not, he had probably attracted some attention from our party, which was what Colonel Warren most desired when despatching him on his errand.

On the night of the 26th we camped six miles from Nackl, it being undesirable to approach nearer till Sualem's party should have arrived to re-enforce us. Our camels had done very well, and were still quite comfortable, as, owing to the thick mists that we had experienced on the Tîh, the bushes and herbage were every morning bathed in moisture, and the animals got all the water they required while grazing.

CHAPTER VII.

ARRIVAL AT NACKL. SUBMISSION OF THE GOVERNOR. THE COMPLICITY OF ALI EFFENDI IN THE ATTACK ON PALMER. DEPARTURE FROM NACKL. THE MARCH ACROSS THE DESERT. ESCAPE OF METTER SOFÎA. DISASTROUS MARCH. I FALL ILL OF FEVER. ARRIVAL AT ISMAILIA. SURRENDER OF METTER SOFÎA. HIS EVIDENCE. RESTITUTION OF £1000 OF GOVERNMENT MONEY. OUR ENTRY INTO THE DESERT NOT IN VAIN.

EARLY on the morning of October 27th we started for the Fort of Nackl, intending to arrive before it about nine o'clock, so as to have all the day before us for whatever action might be necessary. The Governor, Ali Effendi, had always been represented to us as a staunch adherent of Arabi; and we had evidence in the letter to his colleague, the Governor of Akabah, and in his messages to Mûsa Nusîer, that he had espoused the popular cause with considerable vigour. He had some fifty soldiers in garrison, and the fort commanded the water, which he could thus prevent our using if he chose. The trump-card in our hand was the possession of the year's supplies, which were already considerably overdue. The soldiers, who are mostly permanencies at these desert forts, have little in common with the Governor and his immediate subordinates, who are changed periodically in the routine of the Government service. Thus with the prospect before them of either delaying the arrival of their rations or losing them

altogether, it was hardly probable that we should be seriously resisted in marching on the fort, particularly as we had with us a new Governor, to whom the soldiers would in future have to look for countenance and chance of promotion. There was, however, the possibility that the Governor, who had hitherto very cavalierly resisted all our efforts at communication with him, and had been very closely connected with the capture of Palmer's party, even if he did not actually superintend the arrangements which led to their massacre—the possibility that he might make a stubborn defence in the hope of obtaining possession of our persons, or, at any rate, making terms for himself; and to aid him in this action he might have obtained the assistance of those tribes whose men were implicated in the murder, in which case little dependence could be placed on our escort.

We soon came in sight of Nackl lying in the centre of a wide depression, the Wadi el Arîsh, the Torrens Egyptii, and Biblical "brook of Egypt." The fort, about four miles off, could hardly be distinguished, except for the deep shadows it cast, and a dark tuft of green made by some trees rising from the interior court; but as we descended the side of the depression and got nearer, we could see all bustle and activity in its vicinity. Colonel Warren called a halt to allow the long line of camels to close up, during which we were joined by Sualem Abu Farag and his party, a reinforcement which doubled our fighting-strength. Proceeding onwards till about one and a half miles from the fort, we perceived some skirmishers in the scrub in front of us, and Colonel Warren halted the column and sent two men forward to say we were come in peace. One of these, Abu Sarhan, the deaf old sheik of the Terebîn, was allowed to pass on to the fort, his

companion being sent back with the message that if anyone else advanced, the big gun in the fort would be fired, a contingency from which terrible results might be expected to ensue. After waiting a considerable time, a party of men were seen approaching, which turned out to be a subordinate official under a guard of four soldiers with fixed bayonets; they came requesting that Hassan Effendi, the new Governor that we had brought from Suez, should go at once alone to the fort. This, however, did not suit Colonel Warren, who told Hassan Effendi to write a letter to the ex-Governor, ordering him to send out at once the *wakíl*, the *bouluk-bashi*, and all the principal officers to receive him and their new Commander. Colonel Warren also sent word that if the garrison gave him any trouble and did not open their gates at once, he would send their food back to Suez; and if they attempted to stop that, he would put it all in a heap and burn it. The letter and messenger were duly despatched, and we waited some time longer until the latter (one of the fort guards) returned to say he had lost his letter on the way to the fort; but nevertheless, letter or no letter, the officials were coming out to see us, and they shortly after arrived. After having a few proclamations read to them they were introduced to Hassan Effendi, whom they all rapturously embraced; and after the customary coffee and

ALI EFFENDI, GOVERNOR OF NACKL.

cigarettes, we all proceeded to the fort, the soldiers going ahead of us firing a *feu-de-joie*, the bullets of which whistled close over our heads, while the big gun boomed out a salute in our honour. As we alighted from our camels at the entrance of the fort, Ali Effendi came forward to receive us. He was a plain, honest-looking man with bright eyes, very superior to the ordinary sallow-looking Egyptian official. He had been a captain in the

THE FORT OF NACKL.

Artillery, and there was little of the fanatic about his appearance. He apologised for the show of resistance that he had made, saying he had known nothing of the restoration of His Gracious Master the Khedive until our arrival, and thus was merely safeguarding his command at the approach of so formidable a column as ours: he now begged us to enter the fort and take possession of the guest-chamber.

The fort of Nackl is a square, stone-built structure, with a central yard, and towers at the four corners. The gateway is defended by a machicoulis-gallery, and this, which is the best part of the building, served as an armoury and guard-room. The remaining apartments were

stuffy little places, with mere slits in the masonry for windows, and with mud-floors. The soldiers of the fort were fine men. Their ancestors had been Mograbites; but, intermarrying with the Bedouin, they had assimilated to these latter in dress and appearance, though of still a distinctly fairer type. They were armed with old match-locks, and thus would have stood little chance against our men, armed as they were with the Remington rifles which Arabi's troops had flung away at Tel el Kebîr. We visited the guest-chamber, but found the ceilings in rather a dilapidated state, so were glad to refuse the offer of accommodation and return to our tent, which we had pitched some distance from the fort.

We took the evidence of the *wakîl* and Ali Effendi the same evening. The former we found ready to paint his late chief in the blackest of hues; but Ali had been too cunning to give his subordinate much handle against him, and we found out that the *wakîl* had been reported for peculation in his duties as commissary at the fort, and there was thus reason for his rancour.

Ali Effendi gave his account of Palmer's end and his part therein. It appears that two days before Palmer left Ayun Mûsa, on his return-journey into the desert, the Governor of Nackl left the fort with two soldiers, and travelled in the direction of Suez—as he said—for the purpose of taking leave, a rather unlikely proceeding in the middle of a war. Next evening he arrived at Metter Sofia's tents, near Tusset Sadr, where he learnt that Metter had gone to Suez. The occupation of Suez by the British, which had occurred five days before, must have been well known at Wadi Sadr; and it is pretty certain that Ali ascertained the reasons of Metter's absence. The Governor stopped at Metter's tents the nights of the 8th

and 9th of August, and on the 10th went to Aîd's (Metter's blind brother) tents at Rahah, not five miles from where Palmer was captured. He arrived at 5 p.m., and stayed there the night of the 10th, when Palmer was taken prisoner.

There were several camps of Bedouin at Rahah at this time, grouped close together round their *mazeira* (corn grounds), and it was somewhat doubtful in which the Governor stayed. But he probably visited several, and all the Bedouin must have been well aware of his presence in the vicinity. After sunset, Ali Shwair, a spy, came up the pass from Wadi Sadr to Rahah, announcing the approach of Palmer's party. The Bedouin immediately assembled and rushed helter-skelter down from their tents to the spot where the ambush was laid, and Palmer was captured about midnight.

The Governor maintained that he knew nothing of all this; but early next morning, according to his own account, he started off for Marbook, a water on the way for Suez. It is surmised that this move was occasioned by the escape of Salâmi Ibn Aîd, Metter's nephew, with the money Palmer had with him, some three thousand pounds in gold, and the probability that he would endeavour to reach his father's tents at Rahah by making the circuit *viâ* Marbook; but Ali said that he set out for the purpose of reaching Suez and going on leave, although war was in progress and Suez in the hands of his enemies. Ali arrived at Marbook about 5 p.m., and there, according to his statement, first heard of Palmer's entry into the desert under Metter's guidance, bound for Nackl; he accordingly started off next morning for Metter's tents *in the hope of conducting the English gentlemen to their destination.* Arriving at Rahah at 11 p.m. on the 12th,

he found Metter, who told him the details of the attack and of his subsequent ineffectual efforts to save the party, &c. The Governor admitted taking no steps to bring the murder home to the offenders, although Metter gave him the names of several of those who had participated in the outrage; and he remained at Metter's tents over Sunday, the 13th, until the following morning. On the Monday he started to return to Nackl, taking with him one of Palmer's camels, which he kept some six weeks, until after the collapse of Arabi Pasha and the end of the war.

The circumstances of this man's presence so close to the theatre where the murderous proceedings against our countrymen were enacted, was very suspicious. As to his asserted move to Marbook—assuming that it was not a pure fabrication—it is certain that Metter Sofia had reached his tents at Rahah before the Governor left, and the news of the attack upon the party must have reached his ears. It would then be strange indeed if Ali Effendi, the figure-head in this part of the desert of Arabi's fanatical rising, had started off at such a time except for a very strong reason—such as a desire to avoid responsibility for the murder which he knew was to follow, or the determination to obtain possession of the money which Salâmi Ibn Aîd had carried off. It may here be mentioned that while Metter subsequently discovered and restored to us Palmer's black bag, inside of which was a bag containing one thousand pounds in gold, there should have been two other bags in addition containing a like amount each, which bags may possibly represent the share of the Governor of Nackl and other principals in the crime.

It is evident that there could have been no general

distribution of the missing sovereigns amongst the attacking Bedouin, or we could not have failed to hear of it; for whereas the effects of the murdered men were traced to many places far and wide from the place of attack, no evidence ever pointed to the Bedouin being in possession of an inordinate amount of British coin. It is also difficult to understand why Metter should have only restored one third of the gold if he had been in possession of the whole sum. Hence we are led to the conclusion that the money was divided amongst the principal people interested, Metter receiving one thousand pounds as his share, the remaining two thousand pounds going to the other principals—possibly Sheik Misleh of the Tîyâhah, Shedîd, and the Governor of Nackl.

However, notwithstanding the suspicious circumstance accompanying the visit of Ali Effendi to Wadi Sadr, we were unable, throughout the inquiry, to inculpate him directly in Palmer's capture and massacre. He must have bound the Bedouin over with the terrors of officialdom to absolute secrecy as to his part in the business. Once only we got a side-light into the matter. Metter Sofia was being examined on the gathering of the Bedouin to attack Palmer, and said: "Government won't allow me to say who it was that arranged the attack. I do not know who it was." It is difficult for us in England to understand how men could possibly be brought to shield a principal in a crime for which they themselves were inculpated; especially when by his position as a Government-official that principal would have been mainly responsible for what occurred, and thus the culpability of his subordinates be diminished by the very fact of his incrimination. These Bedouin of the desert, however, had had a long experience of misrule in the injustice and

absolute recklessness with which they had been treated by the successive Governments. They had no one to fight their battles for them. No public opinion bore on their treatment. They were too poor ever to hope to be able to curry favour with any high Egyptian official. They recognised no difference between the Governments of Egypt prior and subsequent to Arabi's rebellion; and there was, indeed, little on the surface to show any difference. They had no notion that English dominance in Egypt meant that justice would be dealt out to them; but doubtless had cause enough to infer that to speak against an official, even against an Arabist, would be resented by every other official with whom they unfortunately might have to do, greatly to the detriment of their people.

From the information we were now in possession of, it was clear that only two tribes, the Haiwatât and Terebîn, were as tribes implicated in the attack on Palmer's party, and it was decided that the detachments of these tribes that we had with us in our escort—the Haiwatât under Sualem Abu Farag, and the Terebîn under their old sheik, Sarhân—should proceed to visit their own tribes, and endeavour to arrest certain men whose names we had now ascertained to be implicated. The head-man of the Haiwatât to be captured was Salem Sheyk, and Sualem expected to find him near Marbook. The head-man of the Terebîn was Hassan Ibn Mershed; but this tribe being partly in Syria it was very difficult to deal with them, and it was proposed that Abu Sarhân should proceed to Gaza and deliver a letter to the Turkish Governor there, who was an old friend of Colonel Warren, in order to obtain his assistance in the matter. It had been ascertained that Palmer's guide, Metter Sofia, was at Gatié, which lies west

of El Kantâra; and it was arranged that the Haiwatât should first go there, and on their way visit Sheik Misleh of the Tîyâhah, Palmer's friend, at Jebel Magâra. Rations were accordingly issued, and next day, the 28th, they started off; Colonel Warren intending to leave on the following morning with the remainder of the expedition on another journey unbeknown to these two parties.

In sending these men away to search for the guilty ones of their respective tribes, now that they were thoroughly embued with the serious character of their missions, we were only following the custom of the country; and the plan appeared to give reasonable hope of accomplishing the object before us. With our whole company composed of miscellaneous tribes, prompt action as a detective-force was impossible. For instance, when we chanced on Ibn Mershed at the water of Abu Rigem, if, in the chase he had been killed by our men, there would have been established a feud between the men of our various tribes and Ibn Mershed's tribe, the Terebîn. The law of the blood-feud is rigidly enforced by the Bedouin, and is the foundation of all law and security amongst them. Naturally self-interest is their only consideration, and they will commit any crime or take any man's life without scruple so long as they can do so without risk to themselves. But the scourge of the blood-feud stands over them with its awful consequences and paralyses the wildest. Beginning perhaps in a family-quarrel it may, after decimating the families concerned, involve whole tribes in conflicts where hundreds of lives are lost; and indeed when once started it is impossible to say how long, or to what extent, the feud will be carried. To the individual also whose blood is required, the impending doom must be particularly terrible. One of our

prisoners, Salâmi Owardi of the Tîyâhah tribe, had once killed the murderer of his brother, in expiation of his crime. But the matter did not cease here. The avenger had had to flee his tribe, and live as a renegade in the Rahah mountains; with no wife, no home, his life was further embittered by ever present knowledge that he might be caught unawares at any moment and his life taken like any dog's.

Before leaving Nackl Colonel Warren arranged for sending the ex-Governor of Nackl into Suez with the camels that had brought out the supplies for the fort; and sent orders that his effects were to be rigorously searched before reaching Suez, so as to discover if he carried with him any property of Palmer's party. The remains of the bodies of our unfortunate countrymen were left in the charge of our friend Hassan Effendi, as also were the Bedouin we had captured in Wadi Sadr; and on the morning of the 29th we started on our journey.

Colonel Warren intended to march to Gatié, about one hundred and fifty miles to the north-east of Nackl, and where Metter Sofîa was reputed to be; for it was desirable to secure his arrest, and also to see how far Sualem Abu Farag carried out his orders on his independent expedition. Colonel Warren wished afterwards to visit El Arîsh, and put matters on a proper footing with the new Governor, who might have opportunities of aiding us in our search. Our party was now reduced to about one hundred men of the Nofiât, Maâsi, Ayeîdi, and Bîli tribes, and Mûsa Nusîer. We travelled very lightly, so as to push forward with all available speed before the news of our approach could precede us. The Ayeîdi tribe had been living some years before in the very country we were now to pass through, but had been driven out by the Terebîn; and

we had one of the Ayeîdi, named Abghouénem, as our guide. Abghouénem, was a fine devil-may-care man, and though no sheik, was looked up to by all the Bedouin. Mohammed Hassan, Sheik of the Nofiât, was put in charge of the Bedouin.

The 29th we spent crossing the monotonous flat of the Tîh Plateau, and did thirty-two miles. The heat was excessive, and much to my disgust, I—having for some days previous been generally out-of-sorts, with a cold arising from an indiscreet hot bath taken in the open one evening at Nackl—suffered considerably from the effects of the sun. We followed a bee-line across the plateau, which admitted the passage of our camels in almost any direction; and steered for the gap in the mountains to the west of Jebel Féli. There being a good moon, we travelled most of the following night; and as the day dawned we witnessed a very fine sight, as the massive forms of the Jebels Yeleg and Féli became illuminated by the warming colours of the rising sun. On the 30th we passed a piece of cultivated ground belonging, it was said, to Metter Sofîa; and here we could detect an old road crossing our path, seemingly made for wheeled transport, and totally unlike the camel-tracts which intersect the desert. By the evening of the 30th we had covered seventy-one miles from Nackl, just reaching the edge of the sands, which spread northwards to the Mediterranean in an ever-shifting series of ridge and furrow.

At the end of the second day's journey, we found the camels of our escorts were considerably distressed for want of water. It turned out that they had been watered the day before we left Nackl, and consequently would not drink on the day we left—these camels having been accustomed only to water every three days. They had thus

been their full time, and though they had been travelling hard two days, we had thirty odd miles to go before reaching the vicinity of water. Our own animals were all right, Mûsa Nusîer having looked after them properly, but the Egyptian Bedouin, who, from their residence in Egypt, where water is more abundant, had entirely misconceived the journey they were embarking on, placed us in a position of great difficulty. However, there was nothing for it but to push on, and trust to reaching the water before the animals were entirely incapacitated.

On October 30th Colonel Warren was ahead of the column shortly after sunrise, and had mounted the top of a hill with the plane-table we used to survey the route with, when he saw before him in the valley on ahead a small party of Bedouin coming our way. When they saw him they stopped, and he at once sent forward some of our Bedouin to surround and capture the strangers. As soon as they saw our men approaching them they made off across country as fast as they could. However, they could not go very fast as there were four men to two camels only; and although our Bedouin's camels were tired, and in a somewhat distressed condition, the men would never have been allowed to escape had not our Arabs behaved in the most lax, half-hearted manner. Some of our men got close enough to hail them, and one even to recognise amongst the fugitives the person of Metter Sofîa, the very man we were going to Gatié to arrest; but the fugitives threatening to fire on their pursuers, these latter were rapidly left behind, and the men soon passed over a rise of ground which hid them from our view. We had been watching the pursuit from the high ground where the men had first been seen from, never dreaming that our men could come back without the fugitives, until it was too late to

intervene. When our escort returned it was with somewhat down cast looks, and the Colonel addressing the sheiks told them that after this last exhibition he could only look upon them as Fellahîn, not Bedouin. Only one man had behaved well, and he, a Syrian servant of Mohammed Hassan, had been on ahead at the time the strangers were sighted. He had got close to the fugitives and endeavoured to stop them, but they had twice fired at him, and he relinquished the attempt, seeing there was no one to back him up. The Colonel now called up this man and commended him, giving him two pounds in recognition of his plucky conduct. We made a cast for the back-tracks of the fugitives, and found they came direct from Jebel Magâra, whither Sualem Abu Farag had gone; and it is possible that hearing preparations were being made for his capture, Metter had resolved to give himself up, and he was even now (as he said afterwards in evidence) on his way to Suez for that purpose. If this was the case, why he resisted our attempt to capture him is difficult to say. This fruitless pursuit had wasted considerable time, and at noon we had only done eight miles out of the thirty that lay before us.

The water carried on the camels was now finished, except for our own casks, which had still a fair amount in them, and during the afternoon, as we wound our weary way over the ever-recurring sand-dunes, the men suffered much from thirst. Some of the camels fell out and were obliged to be left behind; and the owners, loath to leave them, in some cases stayed behind also. As the column moved slowly along, the cry of "Mowyah, mowyah" (water, water) could be heard from front to rear. We gave all the assistance we could from our bottles, but these were quite inadequate to supply so many thirsty mouths;

and at sunset when we halted we had only covered twenty-five and a half miles. On inspecting our water barrels, which held enough at starting for six days' use, we found that they were empty all but a little muddy fluid at the bottom of them; the rest had been stolen by the Bedouin, and we had only enough now for a little tea, and to fill our flasks with what remained. We were still a considerable distance from the spot where Abghouénem said the water was, and the Bedouin were all much excited at our prospect of getting in before the sun rose, as otherwise it would be impossible for the majority of the exhausted animals to go further through the sweltering heat of another day, and they would have to be abandoned to their fate. Many of the men were clamorous against our guide, but as we were entirely in his hands, and without any other remedy depended on his knowledge to find the water before us, there was little use in clamouring against him.

Shortly after midnight when the moon rose, we continued our journey. Many of the camels that had been now four days without water, refused to get up and move on, and had to be left behind. It was piteous to see the condition of some of the men, their mouths parched and their voices hoarse from the dryness of their throats. Wearily the column toiled over the soft sand, with the gaunt figure of Abghouénem, our guide, standing out before us in the bright moonlight. To us Englishmen there seemed to be nothing in the constantly recurring sand-dunes to guide our leader to the water he was in search of. Our little column was sadly attenuated from the number of men and camels that had dropped out of their places. Our own animals were doing fairly well, but were beginning to stumble, and we realised that we had

but little time left in which to reach the water we were in search of. As the coming dawn shed a glimmer in the east, about 4.50 a.m., we arrived at some larger hills compared to what we had hitherto been crossing over, and Abghouénem said that these were the hills of Mahada, and the water must be close by. A halt was called while our guide went off to look for the well, and men and animals lay down in the sand to fall asleep with fatigue. After some twenty-five minutes, Abghouénem's welcome voice was heard coming through the cool morning air, announcing that he had found the water. Immediately the column was alive again, and soon stampeding across the soft sand in the direction of his voice. Down a steep slope plunged men and animals, driving before them avalanches of sand, eager to get first to the water; and reaching the well, they thronged around it in a tumultuous crowd.

The well was a wide one and the water too deep to be easily got at; but across from side to side were beams for the drawers to stand upon, and a service was soon organized for passing up the water. To the weird refrain of a Bedoui song, the work was quickly in full swing. It was an impressive sight to see the eager animals and Bedouin crowding round the well, lighted up by the dim light of the breaking day. A stone-trough at the side of the well was soon supplied with water, and the camels here drank to repletion, whilst their owners emptied cup after cup of the precious fluid. Several of the camels drank too much and died from the effects, and among those latter was Mohammed Hassan's favourite riding camel.

Colonel Warren now arranged for the despatch of men with water to relieve those (some fifteen) who had dropped

out along the road; but it was only with great difficulty he could get this done, and then only in a most leisurely manner. The sheiks could not understand this solicitude for men who had been left behind on the road; Mohammed Hassan thought much more of the loss of his favourite camel than if all the men of his tribe had been left dying in the desert. After all the animals had been watered, news came that there was a better water some two miles ahead; so the order was given to shift camp, as the well we were at gave only a poor supply. We arrived at the new water about 8.30 a.m., put up our tent and had breakfast. Round the water the sand-hills rose to a height of three hundred or four hundred feet, forming a regular sun-trap, where as the day advanced the heat became intense. Here I rapidly developed the symptoms of a severe attack of sunstroke. The previous afternoon, while on the march, I had shown signs of being affected in my head by the sun, but during the cool of the night had been all right; I now became delirious, and rapidly reached a critical condition.

Colonel Warren took up the view that a live donkey is of more importance than a dead lion, and considered it desirable to take steps to put me on my legs again, even at the cost of abandoning for a time the work he was engaged on; but it was difficult to know what to do. We had travelled one hundred and ten miles in three days, and the camels were now exhausted and full of water, so that they needed a rest before resuming the march. We had been unable to carry our survey on in a regular manner during our late march, and although some twenty or thirty miles east of Lake Timsah—whence we could get to Ismailia—our guide could not guarantee to take us there. To continue our journey to Gatié, and thence to El Kantâra, would be about

fifty miles; but as this seemed the only outlet, Colonel Warren determined to follow it, carrying me on in a stretcher, though with little hope of saving my life through so long a march. About midnight the delirium ceased, and, through the opportune capture of a Haiwatât who knew the road to Ismailia, a way was opened, and arrangements were immediately made for starting, in the hope of reaching Ismailia before the heat of next day set in. A litter was constructed, and Colonel Warren called on the Bedouin to provide bearers. With the exception of the Bîli tribe, they all cheerfully assented, and at 2 a.m. a start was made, the Bedouin trotting over the soft sand with the litter at about four and a half miles an hour. After a halt of an hour's duration at sunrise, the march was resumed, and the Canal reached at 10 a.m. The men had behaved splendidly in carrying me, fresh men always being at hand to relieve the tired bearers, and the greatest willingness and good-fellowship being displayed by all. At the end of the journey Colonel Warren offered the men five pounds for their trouble, but the sheiks refused to accept any recompense.

Here were a number of men who but yesterday had shown themselves so disaffected or cowardly as to be unable to take four men prisoners when ordered to do so, and now to-day displaying all goodwill and exerting themselves to save the life of a Frank, in the fate of whom they might be expected to have little or no sympathy—and this while their exertions were taking them further from those of their comrades who had fallen out during the march and were left to an unknown fate in the desert; as well as to the imminent risk of their own animals, which were not yet recovered from the effects of their forced march. The two actions are difficult to reconcile. It is probable

that the misconduct was due to terror of the blood-feud, and unwillingness to risk creating one merely for the sake of the Government—a Government that was synonymous with oppression and injustice. For the rest the Bedoui is, notwithstanding his savagery, a gentleman at heart, fully cognizant of all the virtues, and eager to display them where they will not be misunderstood.

Arrived at the Suez Canal we suffered different treatment from men of lighter skin. The Canal-authorities, although Colonel Warren offered them ten pounds and explained the urgency of the case, refused to put us across the Canal. Passing ships were asked to drop a boat for this purpose but laughed the matter to scorn. Fortunately the heat of the last few days suddenly abated, the sky became overcast, and we had our first shower of rain. I had recovered from the prostration of the day previous, and having slept all night in my stretcher, was able on reaching the Canal to walk a little. But the fever still recurred in hot and cold fits, and it was desirable to get me into Ismailia at once. At 2.30 a boat arrived from Ismailia, and in an hour or so I was stowed away in bed in the Hotel des Bains. Surgeon-Major Flood came and examined me, and reported rather seriously as to my condition, my temperature being very high.

Colonel Warren with characteristic contempt for the expedient, gave up everything else for the next five days to nursing me through my fever till I was convalescent, and it is undoubtedly to his kind attention that I owe my life. During this time the work of the Search-Expedition rather hung fire, but Burton went to Suez and carried on as best he could. The keeper of the Hotel des Bains was a Frenchman, and the tone of the place was aggressively French, and at that time bitterly hostile to the

English; thus the presence of a bed-sick Englishman up stairs was a nuisance little to be borne with, and Colonel Warren could often only get what nourishment I required by visiting the kitchen and making it himself. As an instance of this ill-will—I remember, while lying in bed recovering from my illness, listening to two ladies who were practising for a concert that they were giving in the town in a few days. Everything was arranged, and they expected a good house, as a large proportion of the seats were taken up, when it transpired that the *artistes* were English, upon which the tickets were returned, and the entertainment had to be abandoned.

Before leaving Ismailia Colonel Warren dismissed Mohammed Hassan, and the Nile Bedouin that had returned from Nackl with us, to their homes. They were utterly unsuited for the task before us; and it was now necessary to dispense with their services and make other arrangements on a new plan. Mohammed Hassan invited us to visit him at that "elysium abode," his home at Zagazig, and we parted in mutual goodwill.

On November 6th Metteh Sofia surrendered himself at Suez. He said that he had been on his way from Jebel Magâra, accompanied by his nephew—Salâmi Ibn Aîd, who ran away with Palmer's gold—when we met them in the desert and endeavoured to capture them; and he was probably so impressed with the steps taken to clear up Palmer's fate, and capture those implicated, that he thought it best to give himself up. Under cross-examination Metter proved shifty and circumlocutory; while he habitually worked himself up into such an excited state that it was difficult to clear his facts from the mass of verbiage in which they were wound. His evidence, however, was of the greatest importance. The successful

accomplishment of their journey from Jebel Magâra to Suez during the war had evidently given Palmer great confidence in Metter. He described the arrangements for the return-journey, and how he, having no idea of being molested, was, at the time of the attack, taking Palmer and his companions to his own tents at Rahah. On the attack he and his nephew made off, leaving the Englishmen to their fate; the nephew taking with him Palmer's camel with the money, three thousand pounds in gold. Metter fled by a circuitous route to his tents, and returned to the place of attack with a few friends; when he offered money in an ineffectual, half-hearted manner, to save the Englishmen's lives. His evidence confirmed that of the ex-Governor of Nackl as to the movements of the latter; but he stated that Ali Effendi had told the Bedouin at Rahah that they must capture the Christians and send them prisoners to Arabi. Metter Sofîa gave a list of twenty-five people—Haiwatât and Terebîn—who were in the attack on the party, and from him we first got a clear idea of the employment of Ali Shwair as spy on Palmer's movements (see Appendix B). His evidence was, however, so shifty that Colonel Warren determined to go out to the desert and test it, by visiting a spot in Wadi el Hadj, about forty miles from Suez, where Metter said he had concealed a bag and box of Professor Palmer's.

In the evening of November 7th Sualem Abu Farag, with the Haiwatât we had despatched from Nackl, arrived at Suez, bringing as prisoner Salem Sheyk, who had taken a prominent part in the murder of Palmer's party, and two Dubûr from Rahah, which latter were able to give some evidence. Next morning Salem Sheyk was confronted with Metter Sofîa, but the latter immediately got into such a passion that Salem had to be removed from the

room. Salem Sheyk refused to know anything of what had occurred, and, when questions were put to him, did little but shake his head and intimate that his mind was a blank on the subject: Mr. Gill and Mr. Charrington, brothers of the murdered men, had arrived at Suez, and it was arranged that Mr. Gill, who was in personal appearance very like his poor brother, should enter the room during the examination of Salem Sheyk. Salem remained, however, immovable, without appearing to recognise the likeness to the man he had murdered, and the manœuvre failed to effect anything.

SALEM SHEYK, ONE OF THE MURDERERS.

On November 9th Colonel Warren and Lieutenant Burton left Suez again for the desert. Mûsa Nusîer with his Towâra camel-drivers conducted them, and they were accompanied by Sualem Abu Farag and nine men of the Haiwatât tribe. They also took with them Metter Sofîa, Mr. Charrington, and Mr. Houndle—a friend of Captain Gill's. The day following their departure the party arrived in the vicinity of the spot in Wadi el Hadj, where Palmer's property was supposed to be hidden. Here Metter Sofîa, who was much agitated, asked whether there was a *tarfah* tree about. On arriving near one he dismounted, and walked up the rock-strewn slope which here bounded the road. At a certain point he stopped, and clearing away some loose stones, exposed a crevice in

the rock, in which was a small leather-case, containing a despatch-box and a black bag. These were taken out by Colonel Warren, who, pressing the spring of the black bag, opened it, and exposed the contents to view; upon which Metter Sofia made as though he did not know how it could be opened, and went through a pantomime in trying to open it, playing with the bag as though he were a monkey. In the black bag was found a bag of gold, with the label *Euryalus*,* a cigar-case, clothes-brush, comb, two pairs of scissors, two sketching water-tins, blue spectacles, various cartridges, and two pairs of dividers. The sovereigns in the bag were counted by Colonel Warren, Lieutenant Burton, Mr. Houndle, and Mr. Charrington, and found to number one thousand. The money-bag did not appear to have been opened.

It was known that Palmer took with him into the desert three thousand pounds in gold: and as between the time of his leaving Suez and being captured there was no reason for his having disposed of any of it, the question now arose what had become of the remaining two thousand pounds. As it might be in the despatch-box it was proposed to break it open and see. Both Mr. Houndle and Mr. Charrington agreed that if it had belonged to their relations they would have approved of its being forced, so the box was opened; but the missing money bags were not found inside. There was, however, a small bag with one hundred and sixty-four pounds ten shillings in English gold, fifteen Turkish liras, fifty-five pounds in English notes, and an I O U for one hundred pounds. In the box were also various letters, and a rough journal of Palmer's journey from England to Suez.

* Admiral Sir William Hewett's flag-ship.

What happened to the two thousand pounds was never ascertained. From the frequent reference, in the evidence of the Bedouin, to a sum of twenty-one pounds which was taken from Palmer's cook, it was certain that if a large sum of gold had been secured by the attacking party the excitement about it could not have been restrained, but we should have heard about it: besides, all accounts pointed to the fact that it was to a great extent due to the disappointment of the Bedouin at losing Palmer's gold—for Palmer had taken no trouble to conceal the fact that he carried with him a large sum—that led them to murder their prisoners. The black bag was very easy to open, and it is impossible that anyone possessing it for a considerable time, and wishing to do so, could have failed to open it. It was well known amongst the Bedouin who captured Palmer, that Metter's nephew had run off with the money; and in such circumstances it is difficult to believe that the Governor of Nackl would have allowed Metter to keep it all for himself. He would have insisted on the money, or a portion of it, being handed over to him for Arabi's use, or given to one of Shedîd's emissaries for transmission to his master direct. If the matter had not been settled in some such way the Bedouin would not have acquiesced so readily in losing the money themselves.

It was thus apparent that Metter Sofia had in some manner made away with two thousand pounds, and he was pressed to say what he had done with it. He denied all knowledge of it, saying his nephew had taken the bag away at the time of the attack, and he himself had not seen it again until a few days before on his journey from Jebel Magâra to Suez to give himself up. Even if his personal responsibility for the money were waived,

still Metter *must* have well known what had happened to it; and, as he persistently lied in this respect, the court-martial, which finally disposed of the case, was right in confiscating his family's property. It is in such a case, when dealing with a hardened old scoundrel like Metter, that our modern refined methods fail. Doubtless if a little torture had been applied, such as a Turkish Governor delights in—a little delicate manipulation of the *kourbash*—the mystery would have been solved, and we should have been able to point to another couple of thousand pounds restored to the Government as one of the results of our inquiry.

On the 11th Colonel Warren returned to Suez. Arrangements had now to be made for the furtherance of the work in hand. On dismissing the Nile Bedouin whom we took with us to Ismailia, Colonel Warren had requested that additional parties of the Haiwatât and Terebîn should be despatched from Cairo to assist in capturing the persons required of those tribes. Colonel Warren, now that there was no doubt of the composition of the party that attacked Palmer, decided that the proper people to bring in the persons wanted were the authorities of the particular tribes concerned; that upon them must fall in future the burden of the search. In a review that appeared in a home-newspaper at the time, it was said that we "now abandoned our fruitless search, and placed it in the hands of more suitable agents." This was hardly an accurate way of putting it. Our search had not been fruitless. If we had not gone into the desert the remains of Palmer's party would never have been recovered, and the circumstances of the attack would never have been known with certainty; for the confliction of testimony which we received from the various witnesses was only cleared away by help of the circum-

stantial knowledge we had gained in our examination of the ground. By his journey into the desert Colonel Warren had become possessed of information which enabled him to formulate a definite series of charges against certain persons; and the seriousness of our mission had been impressed upon our unwilling emissaries, with the result that we had now possession of—Metter Sofîa—all but two of the camel-drivers who accompanied Palmer on his ill-fated journey—Salem Sheyk, one of the principals in the attack—and several hostages for other persons implicated in the attack and murder.

By our close contact with the Bedouin they had been made to understand that not one stone should be left unturned until the culprits in the crime were brought to justice; and justice and the Government had hitherto been to them two utterly irreconcilable conceptions. The Bedouin viewed with amazement the precision with which Colonel Warren achieved success after success in his inquiry. Entirely unacquainted with his methods of weighing the evidence of all who had anything to say about the matter; of piecing together, and extracting the true from the false by minute and continual comparisons of one man's evidence with another—they could only attribute to a species of second-sight his intimate acquaintance with events and places which they imagined we had no clear conception of. They one and all, even to the honest Mûsa Nusîer, endeavoured to tell us only what they thought we knew; and this position, adopted by a people as apt of tongue as the Arabs, required all the patience and acumen of a practised cross-examiner to turn to advantage. Of the many barren days that we spent eliciting nothing—or, what appeared at the time to be nothing—from our unwilling informants, this account can give no conception; for it only attempts

to record the successive steps which marked the *progress* of our inquiry. But behind were days upon days of patient, pitiless examination and cross-examination—during which, if the unfortunate witness was not literally put upon the rack, the unfortunate scribe—and I can speak feelingly on the subject—who recorded the evidence was punished to a degree that left the rack nowhere in comparison.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOVERNMENT OF THE BEDOUIN. THE SHEDÎDS. PALMER ON HIS JOURNEY FROM SYRIA TO SUEZ. STUDIED OBSTRUCTION OF THE SHEDÎDS. THE FATAL MISSION. PALMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BEDOUIN. ARRIVAL OF SALÂMI IBN SHEDÎD. THE CONTRACT. COLONEL WARREN MOVES TO NACKL. EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS THERE. METTER SOFÎA'S PART IN PALMER'S DEATH. SHEIK MISLEH, PALMER'S "FRIEND." SULEIMAN THE TÎYAHAH. EXPEDITION INTO THE TÎYAHAH TERRITORY. A BEDOUI ENCAMPMENT. ASCENT OF HILL AT SHWEIKI'S ENCAMPMENT. CAPTAIN SIR RICHARD BURTON.

IT has always been a difficulty, for the government under which they are placed, to impose the ordinary conditions of the governed upon the Bedouin. Living in the desert, entry into which without their assistance is, from lack of water, well nigh impossible—living in the simplest fashion, with nothing but their flocks to arouse the cupidity of officialdom—requiring nothing from the State in the way of protection or service of any sort, but only wishing to be left alone to their barren flats and mountains—these people are able to escape most of the responsibilities of citizens. The Egyptian Government certainly taxed them to the tune of so many loads of charcoal per tribe, a tax which, as the Bedouin were obliged every year to come into the towns to purchase their annual supply of coffee and sugar, it was able to enforce. For the remaining purposes of government, such as keeping open the country for the Mecca

pilgrims and for travellers, maintenance of order, protection of telegraph-line, keeping ready the tribes for purposes of war, &c., the government was dependent on bringing pressure to bear on the sheiks. Where the local sheiks were far from any official centre, and in the pathless desert, where whole tribes could, as it were, on occasion disappear into the ground, it was often impossible to bring the necessary pressure to bear upon them; thus to preserve responsibility and make government possible, arrangements were made for the wealthiest and most influential family of the Bedouin to be located at Cairo within reach of the central authority, and held there as hostages, the head of this family was *de facto* Viceroy of the desert.

At the time of the Palmer Search-Expedition the family of Shedids held this position at Cairo. They belonged to the Haiwatât tribe—the most powerful of the Bedoui tribes of Lower Egypt—and the head of their family had been head-sheik of the Bedouin for many years. Salâmi Shedîd was the head of the family, his father Ibrahim having died during Arabi's rebellion, and during the war he had assisted Arabi with contingents of Bedouin, the Haiwatât tribe alone providing two thousand men. When Colonel Warren was in Cairo at the end of September he endeavoured to get Shedîd sent to him for the purposes of our Search-Expedition: but at the time of the re-establishment of the Khedivial authority he was too essential a character to be dispensed with by the central Government; so we had been obliged to be satisfied with Saad, a younger brother, Hadj Mohammed, and several minor members of the family.

The Shedîds, although not in any way personally responsible for Palmer's murder, as far as we could ascertain, were, from the first, hot obstructionists of our search. They apparently resented any interference in the

desert, which they regarded as their private preserve, and feared their names being connected with the attack on Palmer, and the subsequent tragedy.

It appears that on Palmer's first entry into the desert from Syria, in July, he proceeded to the tents of the Tîyahah, a tribe which he had formerly travelled amongst, and with whose sheik, Misleh, and his brother Suleiman, he was personally acquainted. Suleiman was at the time at Cairo, doubtless summoned there by Shedîd; but Misleh received Palmer hospitably, and Palmer, in pursuance of his plan to enlist the sympathies of the Bedouin on behalf of the Khedive, promised Misleh five hundred pounds should he engage the services of the Tîyahah tribe on the Khedive's behalf. Palmer made a good many presents, or promises of presents, while in the desert, and became quite persuaded that the Bedouin would hold themselves at his disposal. It is probable, however, that while Misleh received Palmer's overtures, he reported the matter to his brother at Cairo; and thus the news reached the Shedîds, who, afraid for their heads if their people were stirred into open enmity to Arabi, thereupon sent messages which resulted, on Palmer's return to the desert, in his being taken prisoner and placed out of harm's way. Fanaticism, however it may affect the Bedouin as a class, has little influence on the leading sheiks, and possibly Shedîd, and Misleh also, looked for an opportunity of making money out of Palmer, as well as keeping in with Arabi by making the Englishmen prisoners. But amongst the common Bedouin of Arabia fanaticism is a great power, and under its influence the shedding of blood is as readily resorted to now as when Mohammed and his followers propagated their religious tenets by force of arms. Palmer met Misleh on July 18th. On the 24th the news of his mission might

have reached Cairo, and instructions might have been sent to the desert, arriving at Nackl about August 2nd. On the 7th the Governor of Nackl left for Wadi Sadr. The Bedouin, possibly exceeding their instructions, killed Palmer and his companions, and then *afterwards* the Shedîd sent positive instructions that in future such Christians were to be made prisoners and sent to Arabi, *not* killed. This is upheld by the letter of the Governor of Nackl to his colleague of Akabah, *vide* p. 85, in which we find the following passage:—"When he learned that the Christians whom I spoke of were killed, Abu Shedîd informed his Bedouin in writing that if they saw any Christians they should take them prisoners, and send them to Cairo."

In ordinary times Shedîd would have been held responsible, whatever occurred in the desert, in accordance with the established methods of Eastern government; and Shedîd doubtless expected that in applying for him we meant to treat him similarly, and that as we became acquainted with his position he would be squeezed in the ordinary method current in the East. It was, therefore, only to be expected that they would protect themselves by endeavouring to throw the blame elsewhere, and on the first arrival of the Shedîds at Suez they attempted to put all responsibility for the outrage upon the shoulders of the Aligât, the section of Towâra from which Palmer had obtained his camel-drivers. This was defeated, however, by the arrival of Mûsa Nusîer, and the surrender of the camel-drivers, who were able to clear themselves and inculpate the Haiwatât and Terebîns of Wadi Sadr. The next object of the Shedîds appears to have been to involve the whole matter in mystery, but at the same time to provide scape-goats in case such should be necessary;

and in the latter respect Sualem Abu Farag, who represented Shedîd in the country east of the Canal, soon felt he was on dangerous ground. Hadj Mohammed, in fact, before our departure for the desert (Saad Shedîd was left hostage at Suez), arranged that Farag's child should be put in custody and held hostage for his return and good behaviour, on the ground that he could not vouch for his conduct, so closely was he (Farag) mixed up in the matter.

On our first expedition to the desert Hadj Mohammed let us pass within two miles of the place of murder without taking us to the spot, although he must have been aware of the whole of the details of the attack and murder, and knew that Colonel Warren was still uncertain of the death of our countrymen. The absolutely paramount position that the Bedoui sheiks hold over their tribes precludes all possibility of their people acting in studied opposition to their known will, or concealing their doings from them; and although this position of paramountcy has, as its natural corollary, the obligation upon the sheik to do his best to protect his people, the fact remains that while Hadj Mohammed was pretending to aid us in the search, he was so acting that, except for Colonel Warren's personal investigations, we should have gained no information on the matter of our inquiry. Hadj Mohammed also on two occasions allowed important prisoners that had been handed over to him to escape; and although he brought in as prisoner and surrendered to us Salem Sheyk, against whom, as a head-man in the attack, we had evidence, the behaviour of this man under cross-examination showed that he had been elaborately taught what to say, and we could get nothing out of him for a long time.

On November 12th, Colonel Warren took the

Shedîds before the Governor of Suez, and brought their conduct to the attention of his Excellency; the result of which was that Saad Shedîd was put in prison, and application made to Cairo for the immediate despatch of the great sheik, Salâmi Shedîd, to take charge of our search parties. Next day some excitement was occasioned by the sudden absconding of Sualem Abu Farag and three of the Haiwatât; and we found that Hadj Mohammed had allowed Sualem's son, who had been placed in the Shedîd's custody as hostage for his father's good conduct, to ride away some days before, and had not reported it. Hadj Mohammed tried to make out that this was the result of putting Saad in prison, and said that if he was not released the Haiwatât would all make their escape, on which he was told that if Sualem was not brought back in an hour he himself would be made prisoner.

The Shedîd, although daily expected from Cairo, was not to put in an appearance till some ten days later. The interval was occupied in a laborious re-examination of all the witnesses we had collected, and in making a minute account of the conduct of Palmer's last journey, even to such particulars as the loading of the various camels. It appeared that during his progress from Ayun Mûsa Palmer had met with considerable opposition, both in the unwillingness of the Bedouin to go with him at all, and in the hostile measures taken to delay his journey. It is an extraordinary testimony to the strength of his will, and his confidence in himself and in the Bedouin, that he persevered in the face of these warnings not to pursue his course. The sheik of the country around Ayun Mûsa (Ode Ismaili) had refused to conduct him, pleading that the country was too unsafe since the Bedouin had been incited by Arabi against Christians. Metter Sofia, his

guide, had only brought his own camel and one other, and, having only two of his own people with him, was powerless to safe-conduct the party. Great difficulty had been experienced in hiring the camel-drivers, the risk to all concerned being distinctly recognised. After the start from Ayun Mûsa fresh opposition of the camel-drivers was experienced, and, the morning after the party started, when they were encamped at Wadi Kahalîn, two of the baggage-camels were found to be missing. The animals were tracked, and after a long pursuit taken from some Bedouin who had visited Palmer's camp the night before, slept there, and had stolen the camels in the early morning; and, as forcibly illustrating the exceptional nature of the times, notwithstanding their theft nothing was done to the thieves. Palmer was not to be deterred from proceeding on his mission, but was induced by Metter Sofîa, his guide, to go on quickly with him and his nephew, in order to reach his tents at Rahah, leaving the baggage to follow in a more leisurely fashion.

The progress of the travellers had from the time of their leaving Ayun Mûsa been regularly spied upon by a Haiwatât named Salem Ibn Sûbheh; and messengers had been despatched by him to warn the Bedouin at Marbook and Rahah of the approach of the Christians. It is reported that Ibn Sûbheh had several angry conversations with Metter Sofîa, but what the upshot of them might be it is impossible to say for certain; probably the object was to persuade Metter to betray the travellers, and deliver up the money Palmer had with him. Certain it is that Sûbheh arranged for the stealing of Palmer's camels, and the delay which ensued enabled him to assemble his men in time for the attack: it is also apparent that the conduct of Metter, in dividing the party and travelling by night,

was the very thing to serve the purpose of the attack, and seems to have been expected by the attacking party and nicely calculated for. The prompt action of Metter Sofia in escaping with his nephew, without any attempt to protect the Christians for whose safety he was responsible, can also only be accounted for on the ground that this action had been previously contemplated by him, and was arranged for. In the early days of the inquiry there were ominous bazaar rumours to the effect that Metter's nephew, on the attack, had struck Palmer from the camel he was riding and which carried the money, and subsequently made off with it. The throwing of Palmer from his camel was not, however, confirmed by the evidence adduced before us, although the latter part of the story, the riding off with the money, was admitted, but explained by being attributed to Palmer's request.

In reviewing the sad incidents of this eventful mission of Palmer's, one cannot but come to the conclusion that he was throughout completely over-reached by the wily Bedouin, in whom he reposed a confidence that they were very far from deserving. Mr. Walter Besant faithfully depicts Palmer's attitude towards the Bedouin as follows:—"Palmer among his Arabs spoke as one of them, and thought as one of them, not as a stranger. His was that strange sympathy which enables its possessor to feel *with* as well as *for* his friends. His extraordinary gift of sympathy was connected with his mesmeric power; he was a thought reader. To know what a man is thinking about goes a long way towards acquiring an influence over that man. Another thing, again, gave him a power over all sorts and conditions of men—he possessed in a wonderful degree the enthusiasm of humanity . . . . He relied therefore in undertaking . . . . this expe-

dition . . . . entirely on his power of managing the people . . . . This self-reliance one must point out strongly and insist upon, because it illustrates the character of the man, was complete and absolute. He never doubted himself. It was not in boastfulness, but as a mere matter of plain fact, that he regarded himself as able to manage any number of Arabs, friendly or hostile."

In my opinion, it was this very attitude of absolute self-confidence that compassed the ruin of this erudite man of letters and his companions. The courage and calmness displayed by Palmer—the quiet scholar and man of books—were remarkable, his fixity of purpose worthy of all praise; but I cannot but think that he misconceived the conditions of the problem before him, and in mere matters of fact was often and entirely deceived. His exaggerated notions of the number of Bedouin that he could command for the protection of the Canal may be instanced in this particular, and are specially extraordinary in the face of his knowledge of the country, the poverty of its natural resources, and the paucity of its waters. The Bedoui is a practised dissembler, an actor of no small power, intent on the glorification of his people; and he will talk of a company of two dozen men as a great, great number, and lift up his hands in amazement at the recollection. Highly imaginative as they are, these men were all persuaded that Arabi was a match for any number of Christians, as they themselves were a match in astuteness for any individual Frank. As Mr. Besant describes, they doubtless thought:—"Why did the great Abdullah ride across from Gaza by night? Why should he fear the Egyptians? He will make all rich; Courage, brothers! the good time long-dreamed of by the Beni Ishmael has come at last." In respect also to his guide, Metter

Abu Sofia, Palmer was induced to believe that he was a great sheik of the Lehewât, whereas in reality he was merely a wealthy Arab living apart from his tribe. In these and many other similar points Palmer was absolutely deceived.

It is sickening to consider the successive steps towards its end of this valuable life; inspiriting and to be admired the courage and constancy of purpose displayed by this noble-spirited man, who could conceive little in humanity to dread, and refused to regard the tendency of mankind towards double-dealing and villainy.

When he entered the desert from Gaza, Palmer was careful to avoid any semblance of official status. He travelled alone, with his cook and Bedoui guide; and as he says in one of his published letters:—"I have had to dodge troops and Arabs, and am thankful, but somewhat surprised, at the possession of a whole skin." When Palmer returned to the desert a few days after this, his policy is reversed. He sends notice of his coming, and convenes a meeting of sheiks in the heart of the desert, and, strange to say, at the fort of Nackl, which was held by one of Arabi's adherents. He takes with him a naval officer to demonstrate to the sheiks his authority from the British Government; and carried with him a large sum of money and some naval swords—which latter he meant to present to the sheiks. The one absolutely necessary sequel to this change of front was the provision of a strong escort, and Palmer, in his summons to Metter, asked him to bring twenty armed men with him. Metter Sofia arrived on the 7th August with only one man instead of twenty; and then, I think, Palmer made a fatal mistake in persisting in carrying out his original intention of reaching Nackl on the 12th, escort or no escort.

After waiting ten days for him, the great sheik, Salâmi Ibn Shedîd, reported to us at Suez on November 22nd, under instructions from the Government to place himself entirely at Colonel Warren's disposal. He professed to be quite ignorant of the facts connected with Professor Palmer's disappearance, and insisted that he was not sheik of the Haiwatât of the desert, but that Mohammed Feyêre, who lives east of Akabah, was ruler of the country about Wadi Sadr. To refute those statements, our Haiwatât prisoners from Wadi Sadr were produced; and they declared before Salâmi that the Shedîds of Cairo were their only sheiks, that Sualem Abu Farag ruled them by deputy, and that Mohammed Feyêre was to them but a name. Having at last acknowledged that he was sheik of the Haiwatât about Wadi Sadr, Salâmi Shedîd asked for the names of the people implicated, and the details of the murder. This Colonel Warren refused to give him, and told him he could obtain the information for himself from his own people. He protested he could not do this, but must send to Cairo for the particulars, which were known to the Bedouin there. He was told, however, to examine Salem Sheyk and two other men of his tribe who had been brought in by Sualem Abu Farag; and this he did in our presence, after a great deal of expostulation, obtaining a general outline of the attack and murder of the party, as we already knew it, and the names of the principal culprits.

Salâmi was a much more accomplished obstructionist than his brother Saad or Hadj Mohammed, and Colonel Warren had a difficult task in dealing with him. However, by dint of continual hammering, he was reduced to a proper condition of subordination; and Colonel Warren determined that he should give proof of his good intention by exerting

his power as sheik upon Salem Sheyk, a man of his tribe who had shown great stubbornness in cross-examination, and pretended to know nothing of the matters of which he was known to be a prominent actor. The Shedîd was accordingly informed he must make this man speak out, and give his account as an eye-witness of the attack and murder. After considerable pressure, Salâmi acceded to Colonel Warren's importunity, with the result that Salem Sheyk made a complete confession, thus exemplifying to the full the enormous power a Bedoui sheik possesses over his people. The account confirmed those we had previously obtained, except for the part played by two brothers of Salem Sheyk and a few other Haiwatât.

Salâmi Shedîd having thus put himself in possession of the necessary facts, and being furnished by us with a complete list of persons implicated, and the witnesses required in evidence (some sixty in number), Colonel Warren told him he must write out and sign an agreement to bring in all the culprits in a given time. Here was opportunity for prolonged dialogue which would go on somewhat as follows:—

Salâmi Shedîd.—Ah! Impossible. I shall be killed if I venture into the desert for such a purpose.

Colonel Warren.—You must bring in all the persons I require in twenty-one days, or I shall report you as one of the persons implicated. There is plenty of proof against you.

Salâmi Shedîd.—I am undone. I am undone. It cannot be done in twenty-one days. Two months is the very least time.

Colonel Warren.—You don't intend to do it. What have you done since you came here? Nothing!

Salâmi Shedîd.—I will die for the Government. But I

must get some men from Cairo to take with me into the desert.

Colonel Warren.—Do you mean deliberately to refuse to get these men?

Salâmi Shedíd.—By my father's beard, I am undone, I am undone.

This sort of thing went on for some days, but on the 25th Salâmi signed a contract binding himself to bring in all the men required in thirty-one days, sending in a batch at the end of each ten days to show he was in earnest. His proposed mode of action was to possess himself of the waters of the desert, to which the Bedouin must in ordinary times come to water their flocks, and draw water for their own use. For this purpose he required a large number of men, and after signing the contract he at once proceeded to Cairo to obtain more Haiwatât.

SHEIK ABU SITTEH.

Shedîd was to be assisted in the work by Abu Sarhân of the Terebîn and his men. These latter had been unsuccessful in the quest that we had despatched them upon from Nackl. They had visited most of the Terebîn sheiks, but all had refused their assistance. The Terebîn were a very difficult tribe to deal with; living as they did on the borders of Syria and Egypt, they could avoid the jurisdiction of either government by quietly stepping over the border;

and, being a very powerful tribe, able to put into the field several thousand men, they were rather out of Government control. Sheik Abu Sarhân and Abu Sitteh, another Terebîn sheik, for some days refused to bind themselves to assist Shedîd in getting in the men of their own tribe that we required; but, finally, on December 18th, Colonel Warren secured their adhesion to Shedîd's agreement, and they started with their men for the desert.

This disposed of the greater number of the persons whom we required as implicated in, or as witnesses of, the murder; but there were some other tribes that had also to be worked. The Towâra were made to produce the two remaining camel-drivers who had started with Palmer's party, and had not yet given themselves up, and these arrived at the end of November. Sheik Aleyân of the Lehewât made himself responsible for the family of Metter Sofia, and Salâmi Ibn Aîd, Metter's nephew, who had run away with Palmer's camel and his money on the evening of the attack, was produced on December 6th, and certain of the sons afterwards. Sheik Misleh, Palmer's friend, and sheik of the Tîyahah, had also to produce two men; and arrangements were also made with Mohammed Gad of the Alawîn, and with Sheik Makbûl, for general assistance in preventing the escape of the culprits into Arabia Felix.

All these matters required some time to bring them to perfection; but as Shedîd had stipulated that the desert should not be entered by other than his search-parties during his thirty days, we had plenty of time for them. During this month Shedîd's operations were much impeded by the unusually heavy rains which fell in the desert, but on December 25th Colonel Warren was able to report the

capture of nine out of the twenty-one persons implicated and a number of witnesses were also secured.

Shedîd having placed two of his most important prisoners in the care of the Governor of Nackl, Colonel Warren determined to go there and conduct his examination for a while at that place; hoping also to induce a little more activity in the search-parties by his presence in the desert. Accordingly, leaving Suez on December 20th, accompanied by Captain Stephenson of H.M.S. *Carysfort* and Messrs. Burney, Chapple, and Sir C. Cust, officers of that ship, we arrived at Nackl on the 22nd. Here we found three of the men who actually murdered Palmer and his companions—Salem Abu Telhaideh, Salâmi Abu Telhaideh, and Ali Shwair—with several other Bedouin who were present at, and assisted in, the attack. The cross-examination of these men continued for some days, and was of a very tedious character. They had all evidently determined to maintain a dogged silence upon the events which accompanied Palmer's death, and some carried the determination into an apparent imbecility which was palpably insincere. The two brothers Abu Telhaideh were particularly obstinate; as an instance we quote the following dialogue.

ALI SHWAIR—ONE OF THE MURDERERS.

Colonel Warren.—Where do you live?

Telhaideh.—Yonder on the Tîh (with a wave of the hand all round the compass).

Colonel Warren.—Whereabouts?

Telhaideh.—Far away! Yonder!

Colonel Warren.—What is your name?

Telhaideh.—Don't know. The people call me Salem.

Colonel Warren.—What was your father's name?

Telhaideh.—Don't know.

Colonel Warren.—Did you ever have a father?

Telhaideh.—I once had three camels.

Colonel Warren.—Where were your camels?

Telhaideh.—Yonder in the hills, a long way off. I have tended them ever since I was born.

Colonel Warren.—Do you meet any Bedouin in your country?

Telhaideh.—No! I go wandering about and never see anything but camels.

Colonel Warren.—When did you last see your brother Salâmi?

Telhaideh.—What brother? I never had one.

Colonel Warren.—Do you know this man? (Pointing to his brother, who was here produced.)

Telhaideh.—No! I never saw him before.

Such were the results which often were all we could point to after some hours of examination, but Colonel Warren persevered. Other witnesses would be brought into the room, and details of the attack would be given in the presence of the men who refused to give evidence; and gradually, as they saw the hopelessness of their position, and the uselessness of maintaining silence about a matter concerning which we knew what appeared to them to be everything, their opposition would break down and they would give their story in such hot haste that they often

had to be checked so that the writing should keep pace with the evidence.

The examination of the prisoners at the fort proceeded slowly, and on Christmas-Day Captain Stephenson and the officers of the *Carysfort* left us, and started on their return journey to Suez.

The evidence went very badly for Metter Sofîa, and it soon became apparent that the death of Palmer was in a great measure owing to Metter's avarice and refusal to give up the money that his nephew had escaped with. He may, or may not, have connived at the attack, but his flight and his somewhat half-hearted attempt at the release of the captives showed he placed very little store on their safety; and he certainly aggravated the danger to their lives by his ill-judged, avaricious conduct. The unfortunate trust that Palmer reposed in this man can scarcely now be credited to a person of his experience and knowledge of the country; and it is evident from his journal that Metter systematically conspired to deceive Palmer as to his status and power.

It is probable that if Metter had been accompanied by any one man of either of the principal tribes, Haiwatât, Tîyahah, or Terebîn, the attack would not have taken place; but having merely a few Towâra camel-drivers with him, men who had been warned by their sheik not to go with Palmer, there was nothing for the lawless inhabitants of Wadi Sadr to fear from the attack on a party which was in no way protected by adequate authority. Finally—when the Christians were their prisoners, and either with their connivance (as it might have appeared to the Bedouin) or without, Metter Sofîa, the man who had made himself responsible for their safety, refused to give up the money which his nephew had escaped with—then the Bedouin

decided to kill them. Even then, if Metter had been true to his trust, and had acted up to Bedoui tradition, he would have thrown in his lot with the Englishmen, with a result that their lives would probably have been saved. But, no! He coolly retires from the scene and goes to his tents, taking no steps to inform the authorities at Suez of the fate which had overtaken the unfortunate men who had trusted themselves to his care.

Some days after our taking the evidence at Nackl we were informed that Metter Sofia had died at Suez in hospital, whither he had been removed from the prison a few days before. The body was examined by Dr. Hamilton of the Navy, and the death certified as due to natural causes. Thus terminated the life of the principal actor in this tragedy. The motives which impelled him in his course are difficult to determine. In appearance he was of commanding stature and of haughty bearing, and he seemed to have an overweening idea of his own importance. In his action he seems to have been chiefly actuated by avarice and a fixed determination to possess himself of Palmer's gold, cost what it might.

It would appear that the Bedouin who attacked Palmer were acting under general authority from Arabi's head-quarters. It is certain that the actors in the tragedy had access to Metter Sofia, and probable that he knew of the preparations for taking his party prisoner, and made his arrangements accordingly for saving the gold; while his subsequent lax endeavours at ransoming the captives, offering but thirty pounds a head for them when he had three thousand pounds in gold in his possession, point either, to his certainty that the captives would be sacrificed in accordance with orders received from Cairo, or, to his disregard for the lives entrusted to him now that he was

in possession of their money. Mr. Walter Besant, in Professor Palmer's memoir, puts it thus: "When Metter went away at last there seems reason to believe that he went sorrowfully, because he saw that no ransom at all would be accepted, but that the murder was resolved upon, and that he, who thought only to plunder the man who had trusted him, had compassed his death. He went away; first he hid himself; then he gave himself up; but he was torn by remorse; he wandered in his mind; and presently he lay down and died." In my opinion this passage puts the behaviour of Palmer's guide under a somewhat favourable light. There is no evidence that he hid himself; on the contrary, he seems rather to have toured the country after the tragedy in which he played so important a part, going first to Smar, then to Jidi, thence to Gaza, back to Jidi, then to Gatié, and finally south (when we nearly captured him) to Suez. True! He gave himself up, but only at the last moment, when capture was imminent; and even then he never appeared to realise the great breach of trust of which he had been guilty. His sorrow was of a barren character, which could neither lead him to save Palmer's life by the sacrifice of the gold in his possession, nor induce him to restore the gold to the rightful owners when subsequently this lay in his power. The death of Metter Sofîa was inconvenient for the purposes of our inquiry; but the "natural causes" were probably more a question of old age than sorrow, for he was an old man, possibly seventy years of age.

Consul Moore, of Gaza, reported on October 31st that he had been informed by a leading Tîyahah sheik that Metter Sofîa had betrayed the party and kept most of the plunder, and that he had been spending a quantity of gold amongst the Sowarki Bedouin about El Arîsh. As

has, however, been before stated, we were unable to trace any extraordinary superfluity of gold among the Bedouin after the war, although we gave this matter our special attention. There was, however, throughout the desert a general consensus of opinion that Metter was mainly responsible for what had occurred, and never during the whole course of our inquiry did we meet with any Bedoui, connected or unconnected with the outrage, who attempted to make excuses for him, or to interpret his conduct in other than an unfavourable light.

A few days after the attack Metter Sofia was visited by Suleiman, the brother of Misleh the Tiyahah sheik. The latter had been requested by Palmer, in a telegram sent viâ Gaza, to meet him at Nackl on August 12th. Misleh was described in official papers as of "bad reputation, suspicious and brutal"; and in his "Desert of the Exodus," (p. 330) Palmer himself described him as "an ill-looking, surly ruffian, his features rendered more hideous than their wont by a scowl of mingled cunning and distrust." But during his journey down from Gaza, Palmer stayed with Misleh some time, and became convinced of the latter's goodwill towards him. When Misleh's brother arrived at Wadi Sadr and was informed of the circumstance of Palmer's murder, he returned to the camp of the Tiyahah to inform his sheik, who did nothing either to avenge his "friend" or to report the matter to the authorities; and thus the man whom Palmer had stated would befriend him as a brother, to whom he had promised five hundred pounds, and under whose influence the desert Bedouin were to take service with the Christians for operations against Arabi, acquiesced in the treachery of one friend and the murder of another, taking no further trouble in the matter.

guide, had only brought his own camel and one other, and, having only two of his own people with him, was powerless to safe-conduct the party. Great difficulty had been experienced in hiring the camel-drivers, the risk to all concerned being distinctly recognised. After the start from Ayun Mûsa fresh opposition of the camel-drivers was experienced, and, the morning after the party started, when they were encamped at Wadi Kahalîn, two of the baggage-camels were found to be missing. The animals were tracked, and after a long pursuit taken from some Bedouin who had visited Palmer's camp the night before, slept there, and had stolen the camels in the early morning; and, as forcibly illustrating the exceptional nature of the times, notwithstanding their theft nothing was done to the thieves. Palmer was not to be deterred from proceeding on his mission, but was induced by Metter Sofîa, his guide, to go on quickly with him and his nephew, in order to reach his tents at Rahah, leaving the baggage to follow in a more leisurely fashion.

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They are mere heaps of loose stones, such as two or three men could form in half an hour with very little exertion: in one case the stones were arranged in the form of a rude circle. However, whether the monumental relics of the Amalekites, or the site of a modern Bedoui encampment, it would be difficult to say; probably the former, as Bedouin do not generally encamp on the top of hills, but in shady nooks under their lea.

Under Suleiman's guidance we travelled north-west across country, in the direction of the camp where Salem Sûbheh was supposed to be in hiding. Sheik Suleiman now professed to be glad we had come, as he suspected Shedîd of laying a trap for him by his message about Ibn Sûbheh. Encamping that night at a Bedoui encampment we had to celebrate New Year's Eve; so a kid was killed, and the cook feasted the party after his best fashion. During these few days the fog had been very heavy over the Tîh, not lifting at all until well towards noon, and Colonel Warren determined to reach the camp of Shweiki, where Sûbheh was supposed to be in hiding, by a forced march. Early next morning we started, our route laying across the dry beds of watercourses, bristling with the blades of the fresh grass, which springs up after the rains and transforms the arid desert for a few weeks into a smiling grazing-land—across flat tracks of white clay, now smooth as a billiard-table for hundreds of yards, and again dotted with black flints. About noon the fog lifted, and an hour later we surrounded the encampment of Shweiki; but no Sûbheh was to be found there, nor could the Bedouin give us any intelligence of him.

In the afternoon we examined a hill close to Shweiki's encampment. Amongst the strata forming the hill we observed some sandstone which outcrops beneath the

limestone of the Tîh; both descriptions of strata were inclined upwards towards the centre of the hill, such as is generally to be seen in the formation of a volcano, but we failed to find any evidence of eruptive rocks. From the top we got a splendid view of Jebel Yeleg, and the country to the north-west, and descending on the far side we made the half-circuit of the hill and returned to camp at sunset.*

* At the time we visited this hill we did not think much of the matter, but in the light of the Geological Reconnaissance of this country, made in 1884 by Professor Hull, it becomes of some importance.

The surface formation of the plateau of the Tîh is of two kinds, the Nummulitic and Cretaceous Limestone, with strata to all intents and purposes horizontal. Projecting through this homogeneous and extensive tract Professor Hull in his map shows two blocks of older strata, apparently the mountains of Ihkrimm and Hilall. These were not visited by Professor Hull himself, but by the Rev. F. W. Holland, and upon the strength of his observation these two isolated tracts of sandstone and crystalline rock, of a much earlier geological period than the limestone, are placed as islands arising from the surrounding sea of cretaceous formation.

Now the hill we ascended lay about N.W. and S.E., and was about seven miles long at the foot; the strata composing it were partly sandstone, and were steeply inclined to the N.E. The following is the description of it entered in our diary:—"The hill is detached from Yeleg The strata is upheaved in such a manner that it has the appearance of a volcano. Two descriptions of strata are visible all round, the inner ring at a much steeper angle than the outer. The inner one rises to about four hundred feet. It was a point of interest to know if this inclination of the strata extended all round the hill, and we started to walk up it about 3 p.m. On reaching the summit of the outer ring, the second ring was found, between which and the first one was a considerable depression. On arrival at the top of the inner ring it was found that the remainder of the circle of the hill (from W. to S.E.) had disappeared, if it ever existed, and nothing but a flat plain was visible. The party went down the north side, and saw a good deal of sandstone and baked earth; no appearance of granite or trap. They passed round the west end of the hill and arrived in camp at sunset."

It appears very probable that the group of mountains, Jebels Hilall, Ihkrimm, Yeleg, Magâra, and Féli, are all composed of rocks of a greater age than the limestone of the Tîh plateau, and from their appearance, as viewed from a distance, they would appear to be formed, like the hill we visited, of stratified rock, the strata of which is considerably tilted towards the summit. From the shape of these hills it seems highly improbable that

Next day we started to return to Nackl. Suleiman, after going some way, expressed a wish to leave us, so he was presented with a sovereign and dismissed. On the 3rd we arrived at Nackl, and found that Shedîd had sent in some more prisoners, whom it was necessary to examine.

Shedîd had already much exceeded the time allowed him in the contract, but being still in possession of the waters of Wadi Sadr and surrounding country, and being anxious to continue the search for ten days longer, Colonel Warren postponed his projected visit to the scene of the tragedy to survey the vicinity and make his final examination of the ground. It was therefore decided to go south, to the Convent of Mount Sinai, to make some inquiries of the monks there about the state of the desert during the war, &c., and impress upon the Towâra what we had already done on the Bedouin of the central plateau, viz., that the guilty persons *must* be given up to be dealt with by the Government, or the search would be indefinitely extended to the expense and annoyance of the tribes concerned, and the upset of the desert generally.

The result of the six weeks' work which this chapter aims at chronicling were important. We had now emis-

they were thrust up along faults, but were rather the effect of intrusive masses of eruptive rock. Where this eruptive rock has disappeared to, in the case of the hill we visited, is a question of importance; but whatever the explanation of these grand masses of Yeleg, Hilall, &c., it is probable that their presence betokens some variation to the flat waste of yellow that in the geological map covers the area of the Tîh where they stand, betokening an unvaried continuance of the level cretaceous formation.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Colonel Kitchener in "Seir and Moab" records finding a volcanic outburst of trap rock west of Bir el Hemmah, a place in this neighbourhood that he passed when travelling west on a line between Jebels Magâra and Yeleg.

saries all over the desert endeavouring to get in the people required. The sheiks of every tribe implicated had bound themselves over to this work, and everything appeared in a fair way of progress; and now that the rains were diminishing, and the country recovering its ordinary arid condition, greater results were to be expected from the search-parties. Shedîd, while needing constant jogging, was apparently anxious to exhibit his power over his people, and ensure the confirmation of his appointment in his father's place by the new Government. And in this respect he was the more careful to gain our goodwill, owing to the fact that the head-men of the Bedouin, recognising the astuteness of the elder brother, showed a preference for young Saad as head-man, as under him they would be likely to have an easier time than they could expect under Salâmi Shedîd.

During this time the Home Government, acting under the pressure of the friends of the murdered men, had sent out Captain Richard Burton,* the celebrated traveller and explorer, to assist in the Search. He had come to join us at Suez, and, giving expression to the opinion that the evidence, obtained by us as to the fate that had befallen Palmer and his companions, was not absolutely conclusive, he had been sent to Syria to see if it was practicable to do anything towards a fresh search for the missing men being made from that direction. Almost simultaneously reports arrived from Syria—reports which are supposed to have had their origin in Mr. Schapira, the notorious forger of the Schapira manuscripts and manufacturer of the Moabite pottery—that Palmer was

* Sir Richard Burton, K.C.M.G., who died in 1892.

a prisoner in the hands of the Bedouin in the vicinity of Petra.

Captain Burton's services, however, were found to be unnecessary, and on account of the stipulation that Shedîd had made, that he should not be interfered with in his desert search for a month, the renowned explorer returned to his Consulate at Trieste, and Colonel Warren was reduced again to his two assistants to aid him in the conduct of the Search-Expedition.

CHAPTER IX.

START FROM NACKL. CAMEL-RIDING. THE TÎH PLATEAU. THE AMALEKITES. RAILWAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. MOUNTAINS OF THE PENINSULA. SERABIT EL KHÂDEM. DESTRUCTION OF TREES. BEDAN. APPROACH TO JEBEL MÛSA. CONVENT OF MOUNT SINAI. MÛSA NUSÎEB'S CAMP. WADI FEIRÂN. ASPECT OF THE PENINSULA. GEOLOGICAL CHANGES. STRENGTH OF DESERT TRIBES.

WE left Nackl on January 4th for the Convent of Mount Sinai. Our route lay over the Desert of the Tîh, which was no longer of the same flat, monotonous nature that we had travelled over more to the north, but intersected by depressions forming part of, or connected with, Wadi el Arîsh. The ground rose gradually as we journeyed south, and was varied by several sharp descents, the lie of the strata being inclined gently upwards towards the south. At one place, which we had been approaching up what seemed to be an interminable slope, the edge of an escarpment 100 feet high was suddenly reached, and before us, much to our surprise and delight, spread out in a glorious panorama was a great *wadi*, some five miles across, and extending southwards through the haze in plane after plane of dimly outlined detail, like an expanse of troubled sea. Down one of the re-entering angles in this scarp the camels wound their tortuous way, grunting and growling at the badness of the road and the uncomfortable burdens swaying about upon their backs.

The hills of this part of the Tîh, as, for instance, Bodîa and Ejimi, appear from a distance as flat-topped elevations bounded by steep scarps, such as form the distinctive feature of much of South African scenery. They are apparently the remnants of an earlier period, when the country stood at a higher level, and from possessing a slightly harder surface have escaped the general levelling action of the rains.

By this time we had all become tolerably inured to camel-riding, and our beasts had little to congratulate themselves upon in any want of toughness in their masters' hides. Camel-riding, despite the endeavours of the dromedaries at the Zoo, and the familiarising of thousands of Englishmen with this, as with most other things of Eastern life, which has of necessity followed England's intervention in Egypt—despite all this, camel-riding is still to most Britons an uncommon proceeding, in which novelty covers a multitude of imperfections. The swaying motion caused by his peculiar gait—the camel in his walk follows his off-hind by his off-fore, then near-hind and near-fore, instead of as in a horse the off-hind being followed by the near-fore, the near-hind by the off-fore—is very objectionable for the first two or three days, for the unusual motion brings into play many muscles of the body which generally escape active duty, and the result is one gets painfully stiff. The camel, too, is very loosely jointed, and its legs seem entirely wanting in elasticity, so that the flop with which he plumps down his foot accentuates the swaying from side to side, and makes one all the more uncomfortable.

The saddles are generally very lumpy, and the wooden pommels in front and behind are responsible for many an unwonted abrasion of the cuticle. Stirrups there were

none; to grip the front pommel with the knee is of no avail when the camel begins to trot, while to hold on to the pommel with the hands can only be resorted to when one has been entirely bereft, by physical pain, of all self-respect; so one has to plump up and down, alighting sometimes on the middle of the saddle, which hurts, sometimes partly on the saddle and partly on the pommel, which hurts more, and, unfortunately, sometimes on the pommel, which is painful to a degree.

The great advantage of camel-back is that when the rider has got used to it, he may indulge in perfect freedom as to how he shall sit or what he shall do. The animal is perfectly regardless of its rider, and one may sit front-ways, backways, or sideways, according to fancy or the exigencies of the weather. We once did some seventy miles across the sand looking at our beasts' tails all the while; for the *khamsín* wind was blowing from the direction we were travelling in, and, burdened with the dry sand of the desert, it was impossible to face it; so, with the hoods of our *abbas* drawn well over our heads, we left matters to Providence and our camels. On camel-back one has no trouble about reins; but can smoke, eat, or read, as comfortably as on the top of a coach. The rope that does duty for a rein comes away from the animal's halter at one side, or is hitched on to his lower jaw; it is chiefly useful to call the beast to attention when he requires rousing, but may be used to drag his head round if it is necessary to change direction. If this does not do one resorts to one's stick, and it is indeed heavy work to apply it to the camel to any effect, for his epidermis is impervious to all but the heartiest cudgelling.

One bad habit the camel indulges in frequently, as he passes through a *wadi* where there is any herbage, he *will*

feed on the way, stretching his long neck, and snapping at the scrub or grass on either side of his path; thus intensifying to a horrible degree his habitual swaying motion. This habit breeds resistance in the rider, and one delights to foil him in his desire by pulling at the halter as he makes for a tender mouthful; but it is little use, for he can tire the strongest of arms in a tug-of-war of this sort; so, to avoid defeat, one fastens the halter up short to the front pommel, and continues in fear and trembling that the beast will trip up in his ineffectual efforts to pluck the tempting branches of dry twigs just out of his reach, and in tripping precipitate one over his head to the ground.

We had as escort on this journey Mûsa Nusîer and a few of his men as camel-drivers. They were all in good spirits at the idea of getting out of the winter weather on the elevated Tîh, to the low sheltered valleys of their own country. The Tîh is nominally Tîyahah country, and, on our way south, we saw several men of that tribe, and also some Haiwatât. At a certain point in our march the camel-drivers commenced eagerly digging in the ground with their hands, and produced some crystals of calcium, which the Bedouin use for salt. The ground in the vicinity showed signs of these crystals being constantly found here, and it was all disturbed.

In the *wadis* that we crossed we frequently found traces of sandstone, though it was not observed *in situ* anywhere, limestone in fairly level beds invariably composing the strata. The southern extremity of the Tîh has a level of over 3000 feet. This portion of the plateau is visited in winter by heavy rains and mists, which result in a more liberal sprinkling of bushes and scrub than in the lower part of the country. Tamarisk

bushes grow to a good size here, and there is very fair pasture for camels and goats. On the 6th we crossed Wadi el Arîsh, and halted at the water of Nuteîghineh, which is situated in a little watercourse, a tributary of the main *wadi*. The water wells out from several out-cropping beds of limestone, which rock also forms the bed of the valley. Below the spring the watercourse is bounded by perpendicular cliffs, from thirty to forty feet high, and between them, at one point, is a deep pool of water.

The temperature was exceedingly low at this time, and snow was falling; so we pushed on, hoping to get off the Tîh before nightfall. We knew the main escarpment could not be many miles in advance, and we feared to be blocked up in the pass for some days if a heavy fall of snow occurred. However, the road pursued a very tortuous course; and since Mûsa Nusîer protested that we could not possibly get down the main escarpment at night, we pitched our camp and made the best of things where we were. The night was spent in periodic scares, digging trenches to lead away the water from our tent; for the rain fell in torrents, and, although we were located pretty far up the sides of the pass, the torrents which rise in these dry, barren countries, on the occasion of heavy rains, often assume most formidable dimensions, washing away men and herds in their course; so we were not sorry when morning broke, and we could proceed again.

I was much struck by the quantity of water we saw fall over the Tîh during this journey, and could not help reverting to some remarks of Professor Palmer's, where he states very forcibly that it is the Bedoui that makes the desert, the term "son of the desert" being rather a misnomer. If the Bedouin were endowed with any agricultural tastes and capacity, Arabia Petræa could be

covered with farms supporting large numbers of cattle. There are many parts of South Africa which do not show to advantage compared with it; but there the practical energy and prevision of the Boers convert the wilderness into a valuable pastoral country; and, storing up the water by means of dams, retain that inestimable gift of Providence for use, instead of allowing it to run away and become lost in the sea or in the sand, as do the improvident Bedouin.

In this connection one's thoughts cannot but recur to the commands given to his followers by Jonadab, the son of Rechab, which are recorded in the xxxvi. chapter of Jeremiah, where it says:—"Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever; neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards nor have any, but all your days ye shall live in tents; that ye may live many days in the land wherein ye sojourn." And the fiat of the Lord which follows in the same chapter, viz: "Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." Certainly no policy that could possibly be devised is more calculated to keep the Bedoui the possessor and sole occupant of the desert than this, his policy of desert making; and—in our age of territorial expansion, when every corner of ground which may possibly form a home for the surplus population of Europe is rapidly absorbed—this is probably the reason that Arabia has so long remained, and is still likely to remain, the home of the Bedoui.

If this were the country of the Amalekites, one can well imagine how it fostered their wild and lawless habits. An almost impenetrable block of waste, cutting off Egypt from the East except for the trade-route along the north shore, it was only traversed with difficulty, and with the

assistance of the inhabitants. Doubtless Amalek, the "first of the nations," used it in this respect as a source of livelihood, as the Bedouin do in the present day in respect to travellers and caravans; and all who, like the Israelites, had the temerity to force their way through, without the permission or aid of the inhabitants, had not only to surmount the natural perils of the waterless desert, but, in addition, were exposed to the onslaughts of the wild denizens of the Tîh. "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth from Egypt, how he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wert faint and weary."

The question of a railway uniting Egypt and the Holy Land has occasionally been mooted, but has not received the attention it would appear to deserve. Possibly this is due to the political difficulty of making the necessary arrangements for the Syrian end of the line, while the government of that country is vested in the Porte. It has usually been assumed that the railway should follow the line of the old trade-route between El Kantâra and Gaza, *viâ* Gatié, El Arîsh, and Kanyunis; and the exceptional difficulty of the shifting sands of this district has interposed to bar due consideration of the project. It is not apparent, however, that that route excels others in any respect, except shortness; and the line across the Tîh from Suez to Jerusalem would apparently offer greater advantages. This latter route would certainly offer greater facilities for the construction and maintenance of the line; for the shifting sands, except a narrow belt near Suez, would thereby be avoided. The level Tîh is the *par excellence* of country for railway construction; the earthwork required would be remarkably slight, and, except

for a few bridges crossing the *seils*, and the necessity of importing all the sleepers required, the line would be a very economical one to make. It is probable that the sinking of artesian-wells on the Tîh would result in the supply of an abundance of water; for over this great plateau rain falls at times in great abundance, transforming the dry *wadis* into the beds of foaming torrents, the water of which rarely reaches the sea, but gradually sinks into the great absorbent reservoir of limestone, of which the plateau is composed. The service of the railway would, with these wells an assured success, be an easy matter; and as the value of the district would undoubtedly be greatly enhanced by the creation of permanent supplies of water in its midst, the results of the line on the desert itself could not fail to be of great importance.

It is a glorious feature of elevated countries in low latitudes that the dingiest of downpours is often rapidly succeeded by the most brilliant sunshine. Next day, as we left our mountain-camp, we could enjoy to the full the exhilarating effects of bright sunshine after the tempestuous night. A short march brought us to the top of the Tîh escarpment, and the rugged masses of the Sinaitic mountains spread out before our expectant gaze. The situation is of the grandest. The scarp, stretching out from our feet in a drop of some thirteen hundred feet, had at its base a broad valley of brilliant yellow sand, from which, as in an archipelago, rose abrupt masses of blue and dark maroon sandstone. Beyond was the rugged form of Serabit el Khâdem; and, again, further in the distance, rose the peaks of the granite mountains of the peninsula, showing, by their elevated and jagged tops, the enduring character and tenacity of their component rocks, compared with the blunt masses of the sandstone mountains at our feet.

After feasting our eyes on the glorious scenery before us, we commenced the descent, and in a few minutes were on the sand thirteen hundred feet below. The escarpment is almost precipitous; it is partly composed of sandstone, the nearness of which to the surface of the plateau we were now for the first time made aware of. As we receded from it, upon the plain below, it looked like an impassable precipice; and if all the passes up to the Tîh are as hard to see as the one from Nuteîghineh which we had just followed, it would be difficult to imagine a more effective natural boundary between two adjacent countries than this formidable escarpment.

Arrived at the bottom, we were in Towâra territory, and Mûsa Nusîer begged us to put our arms aside in our saddle-bags, as we were now in a friendly country amongst his own people. We readily complied, for Colonel Warren had all confidence in Mûsa, who in all his dealings with us had demonstrated a singular integrity and straightforwardness of character. The herbage in the Tori valleys is not nearly as profuse as on the Tîh; but, notwithstanding this, there were plenty of goats, and it was now an easy matter to supply the pot. The climate was very different from that of the exposed Tîh; and, although at night-time the sand quickly became cold, so that our water-skins were frozen solid by the morning, there being little or no mist, the rising of the sun was soon followed by a rise of temperature, as high perhaps as 80° F. in the shade by 10 a.m., and we could forget the cold of the night basking beneath the almost tropical sun.

Now that we had reached the country through which the Israelites were supposed to have passed under the guidance of Moses, our thoughts and conversation frequently turned to the ancient record, and the evidences

of the country in that connection. It is probable that in the years that have elapsed since the Exodus no great alteration has taken place in the appearance of the country. It may be drier than it used to be; there is, indeed, evidence of a much denser population once existing there than the available water-supply would at present allow. For the rest, the country is perfectly adapted to illustrate the Biblical story of the Exodus, and—except for some particulars, which will be touched upon in the next chapter —fosters the identification of sites *ad lib.*

We climbed to the top of Serabit el Khâdem, and inspected the remains of the Egyptian temple which crowns its summit. The temple is rather a mean affair, but the inscribed slabs which form part of it are extraordinarily clear-cut and well preserved. Professor Palmer informs us, in "The Desert of the Exodus," that this temple, and other tablets and inscriptions scattered over the peninsula, show that at the time of the Exodus, and long anterior to it, the Egyptian Government were working extensive mines in this district. It was occupied by a large colony of workmen, with detachments of troops to preserve order, the workmen being largely convicts. Round the temple of Serabit el Khâdem were heaps of slag, showing the nature of the industry that once must have made a busy neighbourhood of the now deserted mountains of the peninsula; and amongst the rubbish, in and about the temple, we picked up many fragments of old pottery and glass. There is, however, little to reward the traveller for his climb up to the ruins, except that the hill forms a new vantage point from which to gaze at the glorious scenery of the surroundings.

Our road to Mount Sinai lay for many miles along narrow *wadis*, pent up on either hand by masses of sand-

stone or granite mountains, and covered at the bottom with white sand, or other alluvial deposit. There were acacia-trees in these *wadis;* but all had been pollard in a very rough manner, so as to be nearly destroyed. This was owing to a foolish regulation of the Egyptian Government, which, in 1873, imposed a tax of charcoal upon the Bedouin of these parts. Such an egregious act of folly was worthy of the rule of the spendthrift Ismail, and has apparently already resulted in a serious diminution of rain-fall. The Bedouin complained that the rain had entirely failed of late years, and Mûsa Nusîer pointed out to us places in the *wadis* which he remembered thickly covered with trees, now bare of all verdure. Colonel Warren explained to him the relation of cause and effect, and urged him to stop the wholesale destruction of the trees going on, and which, if persisted in, would make the country uninhabitable and force his people to evacuate it. The sheik took his lecture very intelligently, and promised to bring the matter before his next Council of State.

Not a moment too soon will have been this action, if indeed, any has resulted; for, what with the Bedouin, their camels, and their goats, it is a wonder there is a green leaf left in the peninsula. The Bedoui looks upon the trees as only ministering to the wants of the moment, and supplying him with either fire-wood, shade, or charcoal for the payment of his taxes; and as for tree-planting such a notion would never enter into his head. The camel looks upon leaf, thorny branch, or root, each as excellent food, and hesitates not one moment to transfer each and all to his stomach when the opportunity offers. The goat, however, is probably more harmful than the other two put together, seeking out every tender twig and shoot, or nibbling at the bark of the stems, thus rendering

growth a hopeless impossibility in the present attenuated state of the vegetation.

Notwithstanding the little reverence shown by the Bedouin to their few remaining trees, there is one exception to this in the "shik" tree, one of which is generally to be seen in each *wadi*, and is sacred to the memory of some great man now passed away. This tree is preserved from damage or destruction; and round it the people assemble on certain days to dance the *tawaf*, and perform their rites. It is interesting to observe that the *tawaf** (a sort of walk-round) is performed with the left hands towards the tree; so that the dancers go round in a contrary direction to the apparent motion of the sun in the northern hemisphere, or to the movement of hands of a watch, *i.e.*, in the way it is customary to waltz.

From the light-coloured strip of alluvial soil in the bed of the *wadis* masses of rock rose on either hand in abrupt steeps; and high up we would often see the head and horns of the *bedan* (ibex) looking down from some safe eyrie at our cavalcade below. The mountains of the peninsula are so smooth and slippery that hunting these *bedan* is a very difficult matter, unless the soles of one's feet are tough enough to do without boots. We made several attempts at them, but never succeeded in bringing one down, being unable to do more than make a short dash from our line of march after the illusory pair of horns, which promptly disappeared either for good, or to reappear on some further peak high above our heads. The best way to hunt the *bedan* is to sleep on the mountains at night, and in the morning you are likely to get a

* This is one of the chief ceremonies that a Mohammedan performs at Mecca, doing the *tawaf* round the sacred Kaaba.

THE PLAIN OF ER RAHAH FROM THE TOP OF THE NAKB HÀWY PASS, SHOWING RAS SUSÂFEH IN THE DISTANCE.

shot at some unsuspecting animal below you; but he has a wide and acute vision for all below him, and is very difficult to work up to.

On the evening of the 8th we camped close to Wadi es Sheik, within full view of the lofty Jebel Serbal, which, until recent years, divided the honours of the Sacred Mount with Jebel Mûsa. The outline of Serbal is a very fine and jagged one, but, after the publication of the results of the Survey of 1872, it ceased to be regarded as a formidable rival of Jebel Mûsa, which latter was generally preferred as the real Mount Sinai.

On the 9th we crossed Wadi Solâf, reaching the Convent of Mount Sinai by the Nakb Hâwy pass. The granite masses which form the majority of the hills around Jebel Mûsa are particularly fine. The vegetation is here much more abundant than in the lower parts of the peninsula, for the *wadis* are considerably elevated, the plain of Er Rahah, close under Mount Sinai, being at a level of between four and five thousand feet above the sea. The pass of Nakb Hâwy is very rugged, and baggage-camels generally go round by Wadi es Sheik; we were anxious, however, to avoid the detour, and get to the convent as soon as possible, so forced our animals up the pass, doing the four or five miles in two hours. *Nimrs* infest the pass, so say the Bedouin; there are several springs, round which palm-trees, ferns, and grass are closely packed, each striving to gain a monopoly of the precious fluid.

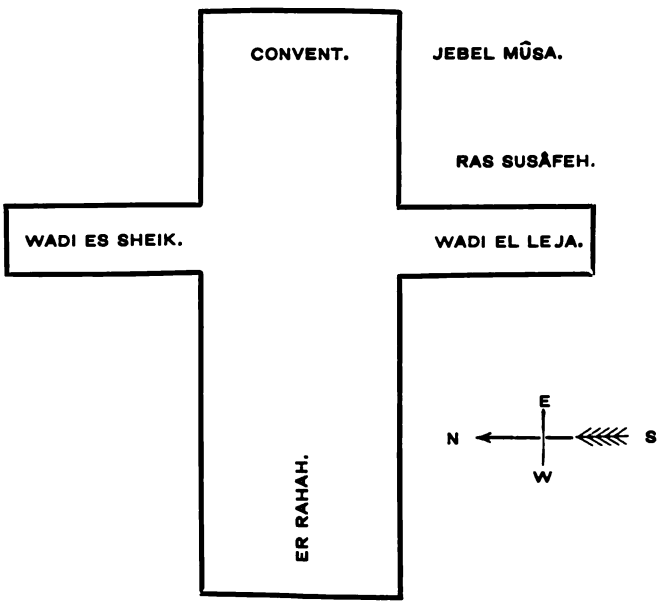
As we emerged on to the plain of Er Rahah, at the top of the pass, the scene which lay before us was very striking. Stretching to the front was a broad plain dotted with scrub, hemmed in on either hand by rugged hills; and away beyond the plain was a massive rock, Ras

Susâfeh, the place where Moses was supposed to have stood to proclaim the law to the assembly in the plain below. I do not think we arrived at this spot with much idea of the greater fitness of Jebel Mûsa than any other mountain to illustrate the Biblical record—but rather disposed to hold the modern identification of sites in somewhat contemptuous regard, as related in no distant degree to that hunger for the remunerative-marvellous which induces the monks of Sinai to group within an hour's walk of their convent many sites of scriptural interest, regardless of the requirements of time and space. There is, however, a majesty about Jebel Mûsa more eloquent than the most learned disquisition of its abstract claims as a rival to Mount Serbal; and while under its influence we showed little tendency to carp at the theory which attributes to it God's choice of the spot where His chosen people should worship Him.*

Er Rahah is beautifully adapted for maintaining the scenic effect of its treasures. As one traverses it from the western end, one can but see the tops of the heights which form the Mount Sinai group; and the centre of the plain swelling up cuts off from sight its eastern end at which is the convent. The plain is indeed in shape like a cathedral, along the aisle of which we were approaching. At the east end, in the chancel, is situated the convent. In the space between the south transept and the chancel is situated Jebel Mûsa, with Ras Susâfeh in its front. The actual peak of Jebel Mûsa was hidden from us as we proceeded up the plain, and our eyes were fixed on Ras Susâfeh, the pulpit-rock of the Law-giver, a mass of granite

* In the last few years criticism has again been at work, and has discredited Jebel Mûsa as the real Mount Sinai.

rising sheer from the plain some two thousand feet. As we reached the watershed of the plain, its extensions right and left opened up to us; while away in the distance, backed by a conical hill, we saw the convent situated in



its groves of cypress and fruit-trees. Bathed in the warm tints of the setting sun behind us, the granite masses, hedging in the valley on either hand, formed a noble setting to the ancient convent; and so contrasted was the scene in its stirring associations with the uninspiring inquiry we had for months been closely engaged upon, and in the presence of the convent, the only feature of civilisation and Christianity which the desert had to show, that it was even as if we were reaching the end of a pilgrimage and arriving at the long-looked-for shrine.

Pitching our camp a quarter of a mile from the convent, we proceeded thither under the care of an old monk

who had been sent to receive us—he all the while showing great trepidation, for his fellow-monks, he whispered, were going to fire a salute of two guns in honour of Colonel Warren, and it was a question whether the unusual concussion would not bring down the convent walls or do some unlooked-for damage. However, discretion prevailed, protecting them from any serious consequences of their rejoicing, and the guns were not fired.

THE CONVENT OF MOUNT SINAI.

We were courteously received by the monks, who appeared to be grateful to Colonel Warren for the measures he had taken on his visit to Tor during the war—measures resulting in the protection of the Archbishop and people there, and in a partial revival of law and order in the desert, where, at that time, these qualities were conspicuous by their absence. We were treated to a quaint pick-me-up directly we had been ushered into the guest-chamber. A large silver tray was brought in on which were tumblers of clear, ice-cold water, glasses of *araki* (a liquor much drank in the East), a jar containing some sweet jelly, and

two silver leaves holding silver spoons. The refresher consisted of first drinking the *araki*, then taking a spoonful of jelly, and finally drinking a tumbler of water; the effect of the whole was excellent, and paved the way to thorough enjoyment of the convivial cigarette and coffee.

Unfortunately, the Archbishop and the Archimandrite were absent at the time of our visit at Tor; and the inferior monks could give us no new information upon the state of the desert during the war, the behaviour of Arabi's governors at Nackl and El Arîsh, the rumours that Palmer's capture and murder had occasioned, and the many other points we had hoped to obtain information upon.

We made as thorough an examination of the convent as our time would allow. The sights are such as may tickle the sense of sanctity of the Russian peasant—the class which mainly furnishes the pilgrims who visit the convent—but are not worthy of the place or its associations. There are some interesting old manuscripts, beautifully illuminated, on which the monks place great value, though it is probable that the books themselves are utterly beyond the ken of any of the inmates of the convent. The library has given to the world several precious old works; and, besides the famous "Codex Sinaiticus," Mrs. Lewis's and Mrs. Gibson's recent find of an old Syriac text of the four Gospels promises to be of considerable importance.

There is an abundant supply of water from the springs in the valley above the convent, the water is stored in large underground reservoirs, and is led out to irrigate the gardens below.

We could only spare one day, or rather part of a day,

for seeing the convent and its vicinity; but succeeded in reaching the top of Jebel Mûsa, which attains a height of 7359 feet. The well-worn steps which mark the way to the top bespeak the many pilgrims that have made the ascent. Close to the summit we found snow in a recess which the sun could not reach, while in the rays of the sun the heat was considerable. The panorama obtained from the top is very fine: the great barrier of the Tîh bounds the view to the north, and all around are the peaks of the Sinaitic mountains, only one or two of which are higher than Jebel Mûsa. The mountain itself is composed of granite, and upon the top, and at several places on the way up, are churches which are made of sandstone. On our descent we saw some *bedan*, and had a short ineffectual hunt after them; but we had no time to waste, as our baggage was already miles away *en route* for Wadi Feirân, and we had only time to say good-bye to our friends the monks and follow it. They were very effusive in their expressions of goodwill, loading us with mementoes of our flying visit, in the shape of manna,* some preserve made of dates, and several loaves of leaven bread; and, somewhat burdened, we hurried off after our baggage-animals.

Colonel Warren wished to return to Wadi Sadr with all speed, and make a survey of the ground; but as we were to pass through Wadi Feirân, he had promised to visit Mûsa Nusîer's encampment; and the sheik had therefore left us before we reached Sinai to make preparation at his tents for our reception. We reached the sheik's encampment on the 11th, and as we galloped up

* A sweet sort of gum which is palmed off on the long-suffering pilgrim as the manna of the Bible.

on our camels we were received by Mûsa and a few retainers; while the women gave us the customary salute of welcome of the East, a vociferous warbling noise like the cooing of doves. We were invited to a collation, which we partook with some fifteen Bedouin of the Towâra tribe. The banquet was a solemn, dignified affair, and the Bedouin tackled their portions in a very earnest manner, admitting of no conversation until the *talaf* was finished and coffee served.

Then we lit our pipes, and Mûsa Nusîer became communicative. He told us an interesting anecdote of the murder of an Algerian in Wadi Sadr four years before. The matter was investigated by Salâmi Shedîd's father (then the reigning chief), who at once threw the blame on the Aligât section of the Towâra. Ode Ismaili, the Aligât sheik, and Mûsa Nusîer were accordingly sent for and thrown into prison. Fortunately for them, a man was arrested in the bazaar at Suez with the purse of the murdered man upon him; and through him the murderer, a Dubûr, was traced and executed. The similarity of this outrage with the one we were engaged in investigating was very remarkable.

Fifteen years before, Mûsa said, the Dubûr stole a camel-load of spices, and the Shedîd had only delivered it up after being threatened with imprisonment.

Whilst the survey of Sinai was proceeding, when Professor Palmer first visited the country, Mûsa Nusîer was in prison at Cairo, having refused to take part in the guardianship of the Suez Canal. After prolonged litigation, he proved his case from the records in the Government offices at Cairo, and showed that the Towâra had never been charged with the care of ground north of the peninsula.

It would appear that in the East both the Moslem and Christian records of bygone times for several hundred years back are very complete, and can be made use of to a far greater extent than they can in Europe. Considerable care is devoted to the conservation of documents, and there appears to have been no general destruction of them as was the case in England in the troublous times of the Reformation. Although learning and civilisation have almost departed from the East, they had their rise there, and twelve hundred years ago the East was far ahead of the West in these respects; in the careful preservation of records, the traditions of a better time seem still to perpetuate themselves, and will doubtless some day give valuable materials for research to our Orientalists.

Mûsa Nusîer complained to Colonel Warren of the taxes the Government exacted from his people—ten shillings on every camel-load that they took into Suez, the value of a load rarely exceeding twenty or thirty shillings. He told us also of his attempts at irrigation. He had once built a dam across Wadi Feirân for the purpose of obtaining a supply of water for irrigation purposes. The dam completed, a heavy shower of rain had fallen and swept it clean away; and the sheik, looking upon that as the hand of Allah, had henceforth desisted in his attempts at improved agriculture.

Next day we passed through the palm-groves of Wadi Feirân, an extensive oasis numbering some 5000 date-palms. The soil is very fertile, and appears to be derived from an alluvial clayey deposit that once filled the valley. This deposit is visible, in protected corners, at the sides of the *wadi*, standing up sixty feet above the present level of the watercourse. Professor Palmer and the survey party

in 1868 identified this spot with the Biblical battle-scene of Rephidim. Doubtless the oasis has long existed, for early in the Christian era this was the site of the episcopal city of Paran (corrupted, probably, to the modern Feirân). The ruins of the ancient city are still to be seen on the rocks on either side of the *wadi*.

On the night of the 11th we halted in Wadi Makatteb, among the far-famed Sinaitic inscriptions. It is only of recent years that they have been deciphered, and the theory that they were the work of the Israelites during the Exodus exploded. They are, it is now ascertained, of later origin, about the fourth century, and are either in the Greek or Nabathean language. The profusion with which the peninsula supplies these inscriptions is a remarkable fact, when taken with the absence of all unmistakable traces of the Exodus. Even the miners carved inscriptions and figures on the rocks, and yet the Israelites, who during their desert wanderings must have had very little to do, have left nothing as a memorial of their presence. Perhaps this may be due in some measure to the course of discipline and training which the forty-years' wandering appears to have been designed to afford—to strengthen and purify the Israelites after their prolonged sojourn in the morally and physically enervating atmosphere of Egypt. They were to make no altars of hewn or fixed stone; their one tabernacle was a removable building, carried about wherever they went; they were fed from day to day by the hand of God, and had no need of either cultivating corn or building granaries for its storage; while their burials seem to have been but simple interments in the earth, without—even in the case of their leader Moses—any enduring memorial to mark the spot.

We visited Wadi Magâra, where are several mines

that once supplied work for thousands of people. Some fifty years ago the mines were exploited by a Major Macdonald; but the venture was not successful, and the ruins of his house are all that now remains to tell of it.

The country of the peninsula has an extraordinary burnt-up look, as if it had only just been turned out of Dame Nature's crucible. The facts of there being little or no vegetation on the hills, and the atmospheric denudation being slight compared to the denuding power of the torrents, combined with the extraordinary medley of mountains and isolated hills that form the greater part of the country, result in an exposition of the geological formation of the country in a manner that is rarely visible elsewhere. Dykes of trap-rock lie across the trough of the *wadis*, conspicuous in their dark homogeneous character. Whichever way we turn the native rock is visible to the eye, with the trend and contortions of the strata plainly exposed to view; and from an eminence we may mark the recurrence of the beds as plainly as we could if the country had been modelled, and the model was the object of our study. On the sides of the *wadis* masses of clay left in the sheltered portions, high up many feet above the bed of the valley, attract the eye by their colour, contrasting with the backing of sandstone, granite, or other crystalline rock which form the mountains of the peninsula. Lodes and veins of copper are frequently visible as one continues on one's way; and everything lies so naked before one, that it would be difficult, if countries could be made to order, to construct one better adapted for the illustration of geology. Used as geologists are at home to look far and wide for sections of ground, and then only to obtain them on a minute scale in quarries, gravel-pits, railway-cuttings, &c., this peculiarity cannot but be striking.

FLINT-FLAKES FROM WADI KAHALÎN.

In the vicinity of Wadi Kahalîn we came across some mounds where the natural rock rose to the surface, the desert being here covered for the most part with a gritty covering of sandy soil. These mounds were covered with what appeared to be ancient flint-chips. We examined and collected a number of them, some with most perfect chisel-points, and came to the conclusion that the peculiar shape was caused by the action of the sun on the rock, splitting up the matrix into flakes, which thus, in many cases, resembled the arrow-heads which we are accustomed to see in museums. It appears most probable that the Sinaitic inscriptions were cut with implements such as these, for the sharp flint-flakes have sufficient hardness to indurate the soft surface of the sandstone rock of the peninsula, on which rock most of the inscriptions are found. It is by no means impossible that there were once manufactories of flint-implements here, such as are still to be seen near Cairo, and in other places in the East.

The recorded observations of practical geologists in Arabia Petræa do not point to any recent changes in the condition of the ground that affect the country to any great extent. But there is one movement now going on, —the depression of the delta by the weight of the successive deposits of alluvial soil, and the consequent upheaval of the country south of Ismailia towards Suez— which is of great importance. This movement results in the continual forcing back of the head of the Gulf of Suez further and further to the south, and the widening of the isthmus to a like extent. It is not difficult to estimate that this movement is very rapid. The identification of Pithom with the Heroöpolis of Strabo's time leads to the belief that the Gulf of Suez has receded at the rate of

a mile in every thirty years since that time; and the movement is apparently still progressing, and will soon either leave the town of Suez far from the water, or leave it situated on an inland lake like the Bitter Lakes or Lake Timsah.

Now as a consequence of this movement we have a secondary very important change going on. The area of sand-hills east of the Nile, which seems to be but an outpost of the Lybian desert, is increasing in extent; and, moving east and north-east with the prevailing winds, is fast spreading over Arabia Petræa. The Gulf of Suez and the escarpment of the Tîh, with its westerly range of hills, Rahah, Smar, and Bodîa, have hitherto kept back that sea of sand; but with the drying up of the Nile-mouth which discharged itself into the Red Sea, and the recession of the Gulf of Suez, the barriers are partly withdrawn, and the western slopes of Rahah are already buried in the sand. To the north of these hills the whole of the country is engulfed, and it is difficult to foresee where the encroachment will end. Here is a great revolution slowly altering a corner of two continents, and all brought about by the sediment floated down in solution by the waters of the Nile—that great river that throughout the period of history, and away back into several periods of geological change, can be traced busy at the work which it is still doing.

We had now been fairly over the desert, had seen the principal waters, and made the acquaintance of most of the sheiks, except along the northern shore, The detailed conclusion we had formed of the population closely coincided with the rough estimate Colonel Warren made at the onset of the work. We put down the muster of

fighting-men, that the desert tribes of Arabia Petræa east of the Canal could raise, as follows:—

Towâra	500	
Haiwatât, near Suez, ...	150	
*Dubûr of Wadi Sadr ...	100	
Terebîn of Wadi Sadr ...	100	2,000 under Egyptian rule.
Lehewât of Wadi Sadr	150	
Tîyahah	200	
Sowârki	400	
Terebîn of Gatié ...	400	
Haiwatât of Petra ...	500	
Lehewât	500	3,800 mostly under Turkish rule.
Azâzimeh	800	
Terebîn	2,000	
Total	5,800	

Taking the most liberal estimate, Professor Palmer's figure of 50,000 men was, according to this, much too great. He had never any prospect of engaging tribes further to the east than those mentioned above, and it is very doubtful whether—had he even been supported by the whole country—more than one half the fighting-men could have been engaged for war-purposes. The Bedoui thinks first of his flocks and herds and of his tents; and in times of war he is little likely to leave them unprotected, liable as they are in peace-time to occasional raids from hostile tribesmen.

The Terebîn in the above list figure as a very powerful body, and it is probable that they are the best disciplined tribe of this part of the desert. They were able to resist our operations successfully, and all but one or two men of their tribe escaped justice.

* The Dubûr are a family of the Haiwatât, which has been given this distinctive name.

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The great difference which exists between the methods adopted by the various schools, in their criticism and interpretation of the Bible, makes it difficult to approach this subject on grounds which will be generally conceded; but, whatever the weight given to their historical and

statistical details, we must recognise that the books of the Old Testament, and especially those books which are commonly styled the "Books of Moses," were compiled from older, and in some cases from contemporary records, and compiled by a people endowed with a very intimate knowledge of the countries concerned. Thus, while we may perhaps be inclined to question the accuracy, or exact meaning, of obscure itineraries in a country which was and still remains mainly desert, we must credit general topographical characteristics as given by authorities to whom the countries concerned offered no deep and insoluble problems.

Experts * have arrived at the opinion that no great change has passed over the face of the country of Arabia Petræa since the time of the Exodus ; but, on the contrary, the general features of the country remain the same in this day as when Moses led the people out of Egypt. There may indeed be a little more sand in the northern portions of the district, and the Red Sea may have receded somewhat from its then northern limits, but, generally speaking, the country is little altered as far as Arabia Petræa is concerned. As regards the Holy Land, and the neighbouring ancient kingdoms of Moab and Edom, &c., great difference evidently exists between their present condition and what they were in the early times of history—a difference due probably to the diminution of the rainfall caused by the destruction of trees.

Summing up what we clearly know of these countries in ancient times, we may separate them into four distinct divisions, as follows :—

(1) Egypt, a low-lying belt of country, watered

* See Dawson's "Modern Science in Bible Lands," and Hull's "Arabia Petræa."

by the Nile, and cultivated to a high extent by irrigation.

(2) The land of Canaan, with the important division of Philistia in its south-western corner. A land of hill, dale, and plain, watered by a somewhat capricious rainfall.

(3) The Kingdom of Edom and the South Country, or Negeb, lying to the south of Canaan. Pastoral countries chiefly, but occupied by a settled population.

(4) The Wilderness, a tract of country between Philistia, the Negeb, and Edom on the one hand, and Egypt on the other.

Each of these divisions is plainly recognised in the Bible, and Mount Sinai is absolutely and consistently connected with the last division, viz., the Wilderness; and we are led to look upon the Mount of God as remote from men, from flocks and herds, situated in the wide-spreading deserts, where nothing but God's interposition could support a multitude like Israel at the time of the Exodus. One cannot, therefore, but reject any such solution of the question of the actual position of Mount Sinai which places it in such a locality as Edom* (which as a geographical expression was distinctly recognised by the writers of the Bible), as entirely opposed to the spirit of

* Mr. Baker Greene, and later, Professor Sayce, have adopted Edom as the probable site of Mount Sinai, and identify Elim with Elath, on the Gulf of Akabah. I notice Professor Sayce estimates that "a journey of four or five days from the frontier of Egypt would have brought the Israelitish caravan to the Gulf of Aqâbah (Akabah)." Such a statement is remarkable, and it would be interesting to know upon what known data, concerning the movement of large bodies of people, the Professor bases it. Twenty miles a day is pretty good going for an organised army of practised marchers; but the transit of three millions of people, with their flocks, herds, and impedimenta, across a desert waste two hundred miles in extent, and including more than one narrow defile, at the rate of forty miles a day, would be something very out of the common.

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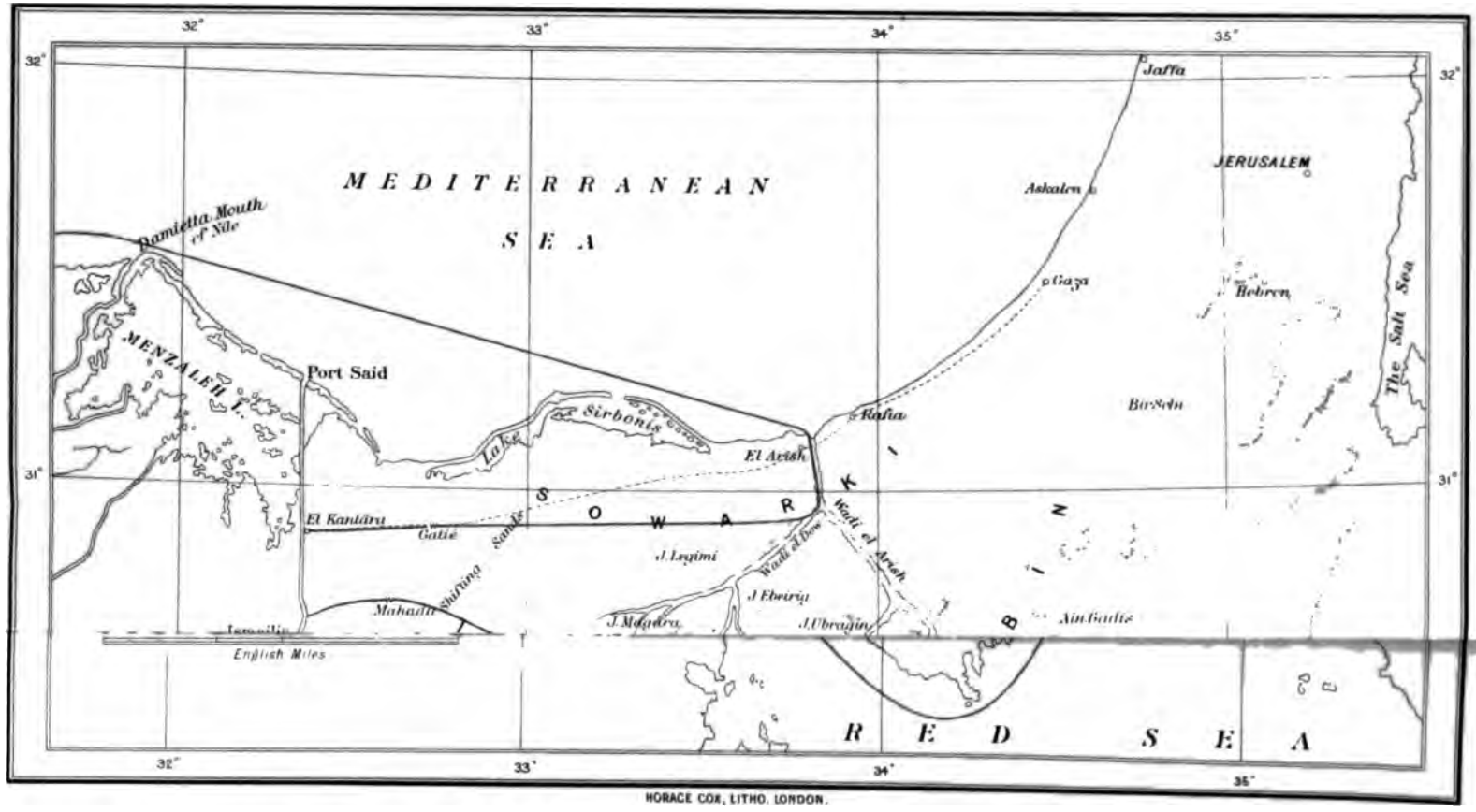
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the sacred record; and we must look to the Wilderness, and that alone, for the Mount of God.

The breadth of the Wilderness between Egypt and the Negeb was roughly two hundred miles, and we are told in Exodus iii., 12 and 18, that Mount Sinai was three days' journey from Egypt. Amongst the Bedouin, one hundred miles is about three days' journey for a man on foot: taking this as an average amount, we should expect to find Mount Sinai about the centre of the Wilderness, half-way between Egypt and the Land of Promise.

Having thus cleared the ground somewhat for the examination into the issue before us, let us look at this area of the Wilderness, and see what it has to say for itself. We find it divided into three general districts, viz. :—the Sinaitic peninsula on the south, the coast-lands on the north, and the central plâteau of the Tîh. Taking these divisions *seriatim* we may narrow the issue yet further.

(1) The peninsula of Sinai is discredited as the site of the Mount of God, notwithstanding the fact that the discredit is mainly of very modern growth, and is opposed by testimony of the greatest weight amongst the recognised experts.* Sir Richard Burton, writing in 1883, says:— ". . . . the so-called Sinai (Jebel Mûsa) is simply a modern forgery, dating probably from the 2nd Century, A.D.; . . . the first Mount Sinai (Jebel Serbal) was invented by the Copts, the second (Jebel Mûsa) by the Greeks, the third (Jebel Mûsa) by the Moslems, and the fourth (Jebel Susâfeh) by Dr. Robinson . . . ." In

* Professor Palmer and Sir Charles Wilson, who were employed upon the Ordnance Survey of the Sinaitic peninsula, both accepted Jebel Mûsa as the veritable Mount Sinai.

my opinion the peninsula is discredited mainly for the following reasons :—

(a) The country of the peninsula was a mining-centre, garrisoned by Egyptian troops ; and no mention is made in the Bible of collision with such troops, which would necessarily, in the event of Moses advancing by the southern route, have opposed his march.

(b) Such a *détour* through the desert cannot be recognised as a likely operation, without strong evidence to the contrary ; and no reason is given in the Bible for *such* a *détour*.

(c) The mountainous district of the peninsula was entirely unsuited for the march of an enormous body of people like Israel. The mountains lie in tangled masses, through which narrow valleys wind a very devious course. Granted that the people could have marched twenty abreast—a very liberal computation—the column would have extended to nearly one hundred miles from the advance to the rear-guard. The arrangements for camping and for the march of the Israelites from Mount Sinai, detailed in the early chapters of Numbers, would be entirely out of place and impossible of execution from Jebel Mûsa owing to the lack of open ground to form up upon. We are distinctly told that the northernmost of the four bodies into which the armies were divided was to march *last* from Mount Sinai ; whereas, as the direction of the march must have been northward from Jebel Mûsa, it would have been compelled to march *first*.

(2) The coast-lands bordering on the Mediterranean are likewise discredited, although they were the ordinary route from Egypt to Canaan. We are told—Exodus xiii., 17, 18—" That God let them not go by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near . . . .

but God led the people about by the way of the Wilderness by the Red Sea." This disposes of the coast-route leading to Philistia; and we are left to interpret the words "by the way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea." These words, taken in conjunction with what follows concerning Pharoah's pursuit, appear to me clearly to refer to the desert tract between Egypt (the country irrigated by the Nile) and the Red Sea. It lies south of Wadi Tumeilat, the Goshen of the Pharaohs. This *détour*, by "the way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea," does not assist us much in the identification of Mount Sinai, for it was made for a particular and announced purpose, viz., that God might "get honour upon Pharaoh": but it does this much for us, that it gives us, as a starting-point of the cross-desert route, some point on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, probably near the Bitter Lakes.

(3) The Desert of the Tîh, the remaining division of the Wilderness, consists of a vast plateau of limestone, sloping gently towards the north, drained by the Wadi el Arîsh, the Scriptural "Brook of Egypt." From this great plateau rises a group of mountains, of which Magâra, Yeleg, Hilall, and Ihkrimm are the chief. This central group is the prominent feature of the Tîh, and is seen from great distances away—the mountains invariably presenting the most striking appearance, rising as they do out of the monotonous, level plains around them. I well remember, on the first occasion that I reached the Tîh from Wadi Sadr, my attention being rivetted by Jebel Yeleg, some fifty miles distant, rising up like an enormous barnacle; and were this mountain invested with the halo of sanctity which God's choice imposes, I am sure the impression produced by it would equal the grand but tumbled granite piles of the so-called Sinaitic peninsula.

Strangely enough, these mountains have been almost unremarked by travellers; and, except for the itineraries of Mr. Holland, we should know very little about them. They are formed of sandstone and igneous rock, and probably projected as islands through the cretaceous sea by which the plateau of the Tîh was deposited. A closer examination, however, than (as far as I know) has yet been made, is necessary before the derivation of these interesting mountains can be decided; and it is not impossible that they may be found of later origin, which would have required a comparatively recent interposition of volcanic agency. If so, and other conditions are not traversed, it will satisfy those people who look for evidence of recent volcanic activity to explain those manifestations of thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, and overhanging cloud which accompanied the Giving of the Law.

In considering this question of the position of Mount Sinai, the situation of the principal peoples of the neighbourhood is of primary importance. The Philistines were located round Gaza, in the south-west corner of the Promised Land. The Edomites are tolerably clearly evidenced in the Bible as being located south of Canaan, stretching from the head of the Gulf of Akabah up the Arabah towards the Salt Sea. Moab was east of the Salt Sea and of Jordan: and the Amorites were between Moab and Edom. The Amalekites were located in the Wilderness, but probably had a partial hold in the Negeb, or South Country. I. Samuel xxviii. 8, defines their occupation as follows:—"The Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these nations were the inhabitants of the land which were of old as thou goest to Shur even unto the land of Egypt." The position of the Midianites

is not so clear as that of the foregoing peoples. They have been placed on some maps upon the western shore of the Gulf of Akabah; but this was probably more owing to the faulty assignment of Jebel Mûsa as Mount Sinai than anything else. We find Moab and Midian connected together as allies in Numbers xxii. and the following chapters, and Midian is also mentioned in Genesis xxxvi. as being "near the field of Moab." From the description given of them they and the Amalekites were doubtless pastoral peoples like the modern Bedouin; and probably they shared the Wilderness between them, and kept a hold also on the South Country for agricultural purposes: thus Jethro the Midianite was very likely located in the Negeb.

From the account in Exodus iii. 2, the Mount of God, considered with respect to Canaan—for Exodus was written after the Israelites reached the Holy Land—was at *the back* of the Wilderness; and also, considered with respect to Egypt, *in front* of Midian, for we read that Moses *returned* unto Jethro from Mount Sinai to get leave to go *back* to Egypt. And, again, when Moses left Sinai for Kadesh, he wanted to take Hobab the Midianite with him, for he could be to them "instead of eyes." Thus there is nothing in the suggestion of Jebel Magâra or Yeleg as Mount Sinai inconsistent with the sacred record in respect to the position of Midian.

The arrangements for the march of the Israelites detailed in the early chapters of Numbers are also of great interest in this connection. We can imagine the Israelites grouped round the Mount of God, supplied with water and food by God, surrounded by the hostile bands of Amalek, who, though defeated in pitched battles, pursued the chosen people with relentless vigour. "Remember what Amalek

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The great difference which exists between the methods adopted by the various schools, in their criticism and interpretation of the Bible, makes it difficult to approach this subject on grounds which will be generally conceded; but, whatever the weight given to their historical and

statistical details, we must recognise that the books of the Old Testament, and especially those books which are commonly styled the "Books of Moses," were compiled from older, and in some cases from contemporary records, and compiled by a people endowed with a very intimate knowledge of the countries concerned. Thus, while we may perhaps be inclined to question the accuracy, or exact meaning, of obscure itineraries in a country which was and still remains mainly desert, we must credit general topographical characteristics as given by authorities to whom the countries concerned offered no deep and insoluble problems.

Experts * have arrived at the opinion that no great change has passed over the face of the country of Arabia Petræa since the time of the Exodus; but, on the contrary, the general features of the country remain the same in this day as when Moses led the people out of Egypt. There may indeed be a little more sand in the northern portions of the district, and the Red Sea may have receded somewhat from its then northern limits, but, generally speaking, the country is little altered as far as Arabia Petræa is concerned. As regards the Holy Land, and the neighbouring ancient kingdoms of Moab and Edom, &c., great difference evidently exists between their present condition and what they were in the early times of history—a difference due probably to the diminution of the rainfall caused by the destruction of trees.

Summing up what we clearly know of these countries in ancient times, we may separate them into four distinct divisions, as follows:—

(1) Egypt, a low-lying belt of country, watered

* See Dawson's "Modern Science in Bible Lands," and Hull's "Arabia Petræa."

by the Nile, and cultivated to a high extent by irrigation.

(2) The land of Canaan, with the important division of Philistia in its south-western corner. A land of hill, dale, and plain, watered by a somewhat capricious rainfall.

(3) The Kingdom of Edom and the South Country, or Negeb, lying to the south of Canaan. Pastoral countries chiefly, but occupied by a settled population.

(4) The Wilderness, a tract of country between Philistia, the Negeb, and Edom on the one hand, and Egypt on the other.

Each of these divisions is plainly recognised in the Bible, and Mount Sinai is absolutely and consistently connected with the last division, viz., the Wilderness; and we are led to look upon the Mount of God as remote from men, from flocks and herds, situated in the wide-spreading deserts, where nothing but God's interposition could support a multitude like Israel at the time of the Exodus. One cannot, therefore, but reject any such solution of the question of the actual position of Mount Sinai which places it in such a locality as Edom* (which as a geographical expression was distinctly recognised by the writers of the Bible), as entirely opposed to the spirit of

* Mr. Baker Greene, and later, Professor Sayce, have adopted Edom as the probable site of Mount Sinai, and identify Elim with Elath, on the Gulf of Akabah. I notice Professor Sayce estimates that "a journey of four or five days from the frontier of Egypt would have brought the Israelitish caravan to the Gulf of Aqâbah (Akabah)." Such a statement is remarkable, and it would be interesting to know upon what known data, concerning the movement of large bodies of people, the Professor bases it. Twenty miles a day is pretty good going for an organised army of practised marchers; but the transit of three millions of people, with their flocks, herds, and impedimenta, across a desert waste two hundred miles in extent, and including more than one narrow defile, at the rate of forty miles a day, would be something very out of the common.

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The breadth of the Wilderness between Egypt and the Negeb was roughly two hundred miles, and we are told in Exodus iii., 12 and 18, that Mount Sinai was three days' journey from Egypt. Amongst the Bedouin, one hundred miles is about three days' journey for a man on foot: taking this as an average amount, we should expect to find Mount Sinai about the centre of the Wilderness, half-way between Egypt and the Land of Promise.

Having thus cleared the ground somewhat for the examination into the issue before us, let us look at this area of the Wilderness, and see what it has to say for itself. We find it divided into three general districts, viz. :—the Sinaitic peninsula on the south, the coast-lands on the north, and the central plâteau of the Tîh. Taking these divisions *seriatim* we may narrow the issue yet further.

(1) The peninsula of Sinai is discredited as the site of the Mount of God, notwithstanding the fact that the discredit is mainly of very modern growth, and is opposed by testimony of the greatest weight amongst the recognised experts.* Sir Richard Burton, writing in 1883, says:— ". . . . the so-called Sinai (Jebel Mûsa) is simply a modern forgery, dating probably from the 2nd Century, A.D.; . . . the first Mount Sinai (Jebel Serbal) was invented by the Copts, the second (Jebel Mûsa) by the Greeks, the third (Jebel Mûsa) by the Moslems, and the fourth (Jebel Susâfeh) by Dr. Robinson . . . ." In

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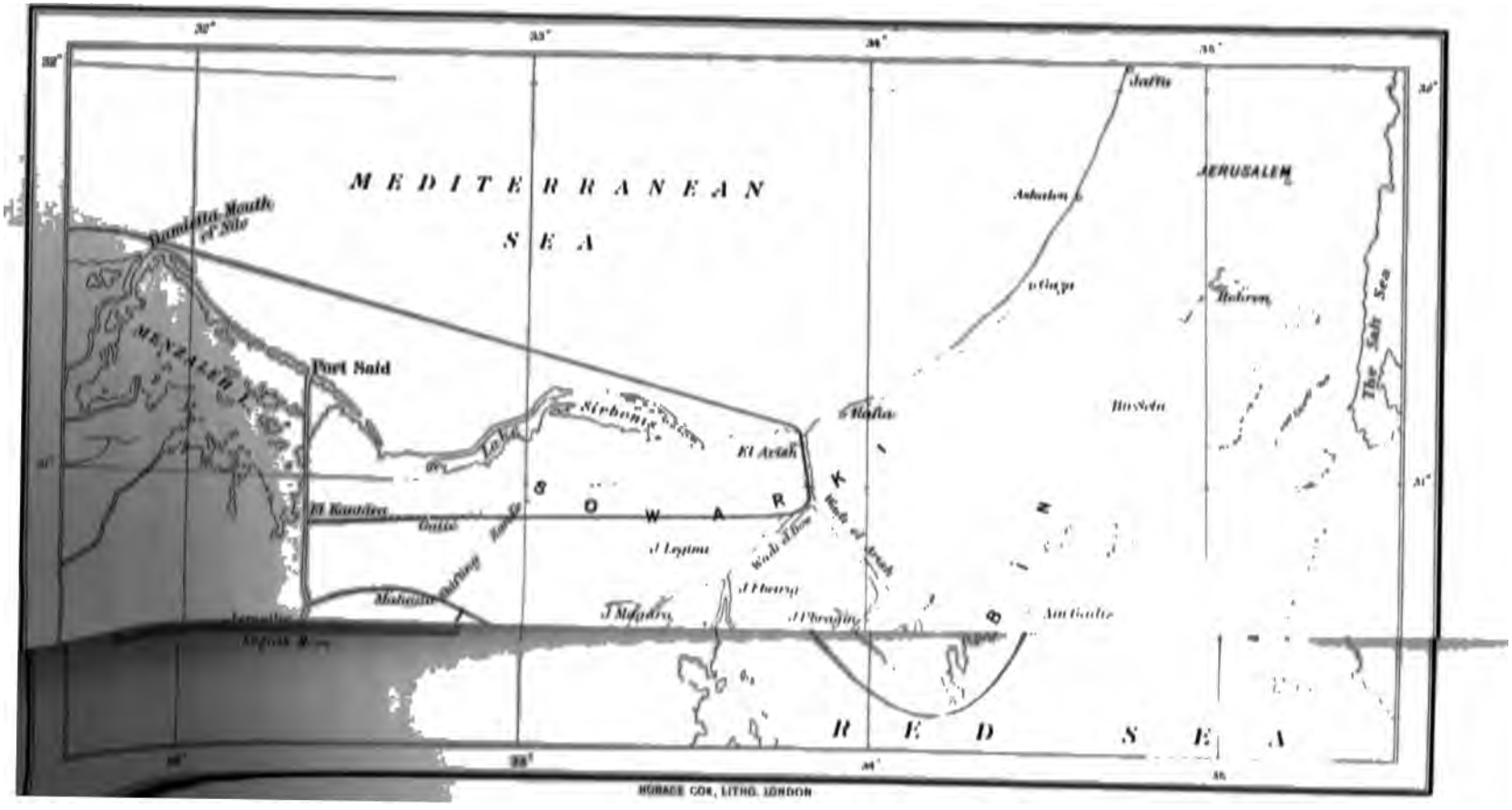

HORACE COX, LITHO. LONDON

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my opinion the peninsula is discredited mainly for the following reasons :—

(a) The country of the peninsula was a mining-centre, garrisoned by Egyptian troops ; and no mention is made in the Bible of collision with such troops, which would necessarily, in the event of Moses advancing by the southern route, have opposed his march.

(b) Such a *détour* through the desert cannot be recognised as a likely operation, without strong evidence to the contrary ; and no reason is given in the Bible for *such* a *détour*.

(c) The mountainous district of the peninsula was entirely unsuited for the march of an enormous body of people like Israel. The mountains lie in tangled masses, through which narrow valleys wind a very devious course. Granted that the people could have marched twenty abreast—a very liberal computation—the column would have extended to nearly one hundred miles from the advance to the rear-guard. The arrangements for camping and for the march of the Israelites from Mount Sinai, detailed in the early chapters of Numbers, would be entirely out of place and impossible of execution from Jebel Mûsa owing to the lack of open ground to form up upon. We are distinctly told that the northernmost of the four bodies into which the armies were divided was to march *last* from Mount Sinai ; whereas, as the direction of the march must have been northward from Jebel Mûsa, it would have been compelled to march *first*.

(2) The coast-lands bordering on the Mediterranean are likewise discredited, although they were the ordinary route from Egypt to Canaan. We are told—Exodus xiii., 17, 18—" That God let them not go by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near . . . .

but God led the people about by the way of the Wilderness by the Red Sea." This disposes of the coast-route leading to Philistia; and we are left to interpret the words "by the way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea." These words, taken in conjunction with what follows concerning Pharoah's pursuit, appear to me clearly to refer to the desert tract between Egypt (the country irrigated by the Nile) and the Red Sea. It lies south of Wadi Tumeilat, the Goshen of the Pharaohs. This *détour*, by "the way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea," does not assist us much in the identification of Mount Sinai, for it was made for a particular and announced purpose, viz., that God might "get honour upon Pharaoh": but it does this much for us, that it gives us, as a starting-point of the cross-desert route, some point on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, probably near the Bitter Lakes.

(3) The Desert of the Tîh, the remaining division of the Wilderness, consists of a vast plateau of limestone, sloping gently towards the north, drained by the Wadi el Arîsh, the Scriptural "Brook of Egypt." From this great plateau rises a group of mountains, of which Magâra, Yeleg, Hilall, and Ihkrimm are the chief. This central group is the prominent feature of the Tîh, and is seen from great distances away—the mountains invariably presenting the most striking appearance, rising as they do out of the monotonous, level plains around them. I well remember, on the first occasion that I reached the Tîh from Wadi Sadr, my attention being rivetted by Jebel Yeleg, some fifty miles distant, rising up like an enormous barnacle; and were this mountain invested with the halo of sanctity which God's choice imposes, I am sure the impression produced by it would equal the grand but tumbled granite piles of the so-called Sinaitic peninsula.

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Strangely enough, these mountains have been almost unremarked by travellers; and, except for the itineraries of Mr. Holland, we should know very little about them. They are formed of sandstone and igneous rock, and probably projected as islands through the cretaceous sea by which the plateau of the Tîh was deposited. A closer examination, however, than (as far as I know) has yet been made, is necessary before the derivation of these interesting mountains can be decided; and it is not impossible that they may be found of later origin, which would have required a comparatively recent interposition of volcanic agency. If so, and other conditions are not traversed, it will satisfy those people who look for evidence of recent volcanic activity to explain those manifestations of thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, and overhanging cloud which accompanied the Giving of the Law.

In considering this question of the position of Mount Sinai, the situation of the principal peoples of the neighbourhood is of primary importance. The Philistines were located round Gaza, in the south-west corner of the Promised Land. The Edomites are tolerably clearly evidenced in the Bible as being located south of Canaan, stretching from the head of the Gulf of Akabah up the Arabah towards the Salt Sea. Moab was east of the Salt Sea and of Jordan: and the Amorites were between Moab and Edom. The Amalekites were located in the Wilderness, but probably had a partial hold in the Negeb, or South Country. I. Samuel xxviii. 8, defines their occupation as follows:—"The Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these nations were the inhabitants of the land which were of old as thou goest to Shur even unto the land of Egypt." The position of the Midianites

is not so clear as that of the foregoing peoples. They have been placed on some maps upon the western shore of the Gulf of Akabah; but this was probably more owing to the faulty assignment of Jebel Mûsa as Mount Sinai than anything else. We find Moab and Midian connected together as allies in Numbers xxii. and the following chapters, and Midian is also mentioned in Genesis xxxvi. as being "near the field of Moab." From the description given of them they and the Amalekites were doubtless pastoral peoples like the modern Bedouin; and probably they shared the Wilderness between them, and kept a hold also on the South Country for agricultural purposes: thus Jethro the Midianite was very likely located in the Negeb.

From the account in Exodus iii. 2, the Mount of God, considered with respect to Canaan—for Exodus was written after the Israelites reached the Holy Land—was at *the back* of the Wilderness; and also, considered with respect to Egypt, *in front* of Midian, for we read that Moses *returned* unto Jethro from Mount Sinai to get leave to go *back* to Egypt. And, again, when Moses left Sinai for Kadesh, he wanted to take Hobab the Midianite with him, for he could be to them "instead of eyes." Thus there is nothing in the suggestion of Jebel Magâra or Yeleg as Mount Sinai inconsistent with the sacred record in respect to the position of Midian.

The arrangements for the march of the Israelites detailed in the early chapters of Numbers are also of great interest in this connection. We can imagine the Israelites grouped round the Mount of God, supplied with water and food by God, surrounded by the hostile bands of Amalek, who, though defeated in pitched battles, pursued the chosen people with relentless vigour. "Remember what Amalek

did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee when thou wast faint and weary. Therefore, it shall be that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." Deuteronomy xxv. 18, 19. The detail for the march is as follows:—Four armies were formed to take up their position north, east, south, and west. On the east was the strongest body, containing 186,400 men, facing in the direction in which the main advance was to be made; in rear, to the west, was the smallest body, 108,100 men; facing the north, towards the dreaded power of Philistia and the populous district of the Negeb, was the second strongest body, 157,600 men; while on the south was another 151,000 strong. In the interval between the four armies were the Tabernacle and the Levites, round which, doubtless, were grouped that mixed multitude, and the women and the children, who, with the flocks and herds, made up the vast concourse of Israel. An assembly such as this could not have covered less than twenty-five square miles in camp, or nine square miles on the march; and the difficulty of commanding such a body is recognised in the Book of Numbers, in the minute detail of the orders for the advance. When leaving Mount Sinai the eastern army was to start first, followed by the southern army, as if the direction of march was easterly, or east by south; and the remainder of the Israelites would follow, the last to move being the northern force. For such tactical arrangements the open tableland of the Tîh would have been most suitable—nay, in few other places would it have been possible to carry out such arrangements.

The group of mountains, Magâra, Yeleg, Hilall, and Ihkrimm, appear to me to fulfil all the primary conditions

which are forced upon us by the Scriptural account of the Exodus; and it is a matter of wonder to me that they have not ere this been appropriated as the first favourites for the honours of the Sacred Mount. Now that we have some special status in the country, it appears most desirable that an accurate and exhaustive examination should be made into their topographical features. As far as it is known the topography of the country does not clash with the details of the Biblical narrative. For instance, take the journey of over two months from Rameses, which was situated in Wadi Tumeilat, to Sinai. Taking the shortest line of route, such a march could not have averaged more than two miles a day—a much smaller record than is generally considered a fair allowance. When, however, one thinks seriously of the matter, what a difficulty the moving of a heterogenous medley of enslaved people would constitute, with only one leader (or at most two) to look up to, one cannot wonder at their moving so slowly; in fact, the only thing to wonder at is that they could be moved at all as one body.

I regret to have no identification of sites to urge as marking the probable positions of Marah, Elim, &c., but, with our present knowledge of the country, such indentification is but idle imagining; and it is very questionable whether the great lapse of time, 3,000 years and more since the Exodus, does not render the identification of places of such little importance a hopeless task. There are, however, two points to notice:—one, in respect to the Wilderness of Sin (Clay). In some parts of the Tîh—and close beside Jebel Yeleg I recollect one very remarkable instance—the plain is composed of one smooth, level expanse of clay, hard enough to walk upon, leaving just the slightest print of the boot, and so level that comparison with a billiard-

board would be more appropriate than with a tennis-court. The Wilderness of Clay would, it appears, be a singularly appropriate name for much of this country, the marly nature of the surface-soil of which is everywhere apparent. The other point is in reference to the "Holy Wadi of Towa," mentioned in the Koran in connection with Mount Sinai. The similarity of this name and Wadi el Dow, near Jebel Magâra, is worthy of note.

The progress of the Israelites from Mount Sinai to Kadesh offers no particular difficulties. The identification by Professor Palmer of Ain Gadis as the site of Kadesh, has generally been accepted, and fits in conveniently with most theories. Although the Book of Numbers gives only three camping-grounds between Mount Sinai and Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Paran—which would agree very well with a march direct upon Kadesh from the mountains of the central group—Deuteronomy opens by telling us that it was 'eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea." What "by the way of Mount Seir" means is very uncertain, for Mount Seir is generally applied *en bloc*—on what grounds I have failed to ascertain—to the Edomite highlands east of the Arabah; but as the following verse to the above dates from the eleventh month of the fortieth year of the wanderings, the above statement, having nothing to do with the context, is doubly difficult to understand. If, however, it is competent to assume that the eleven days' journey means that it took the Israelites eleven days to accomplish the distance from Jebel Magâra to Kadesh, no difficulty results.

Again, the description given of Elijah's journey from a point a day's journey beyond Beersheba—identified by Palmer as Bir Sebi—presents no difficulty. The Bible

says that he went thence forty days before reaching Mount Sinai. But it does not say that he did anything but wander aimlessly about in the Wilderness until forty days afterwards, when he found himself in a cave in Horeb. It is interesting to notice in this connection that Jebel Magâra means "Mountain of the Cave";* and although the name could very reasonably be applied to many of the Arabian hills, popular notions concerning the persistence of local names in the East direct attention to the circumstance.

One thing cannot fail to strike the Bible reader interested in this question, namely, the absence in the Scriptures of all signs of interest about the locality of Mount Sinai. One would have thought a people who set such store on their high places would have cherished the recollection of the place where their nation was literally raised out of death into a new life, and would have done all to perpetuate its memory. It may be, however, that the enforcing of the sense of God's holiness—which appears to have been one of the chief results of God's teaching at Mount Sinai—was so complete, that the sacred mountain was looked upon with dread rather than with love; as a place to be avoided and left entirely to God, lest, by touching the Mount even, God's wrath should be brought down upon them to consume them in his anger. For many generations after the Giving of the Law Israel was busily engaged in the very practical pursuit of killing their enemies, of conquering the Land of Promise, or bearing the yoke of their periodical enslavements; it is, then, little wonder that they lacked the time or inclination to give play to that predisposition to pilgrimage which

* One authority states that Jebel Magâra means "Mount of the Visit," a title equally suggestive.

appears to be a pretty general characteristic of the human race. To whatever cause this neglect of the great spiritual birthplace of their nation may be attributed, it is sufficiently remarkable, the more so as in the Psalms Mount Sinai is frequently referred to; and we find it left to a latter-day people, a people of another creed and another race, to revive the interest in God's Mount. At least we must be grateful to the monks and anchorites of old for creating and keeping alive—even by such illicit methods as the mock identification of sites—the interest in these holy places, the position of which is still of absorbing interest.

NOTE.—Since putting together this chapter I have seen a statement in Sir Richard Burton's report on the Search for Palmer, that "learned Jews now incline to the belief that the real Tor Sínâ lay somewhere in the Tîh, north of the great Pilgrimage Line." This belief supports my suggestion as to the position of Mount Sinai, the group of mountains in question lying north of the Hadj route from Suez to Akabah, about midway between these two places.

CHAPTER XI.

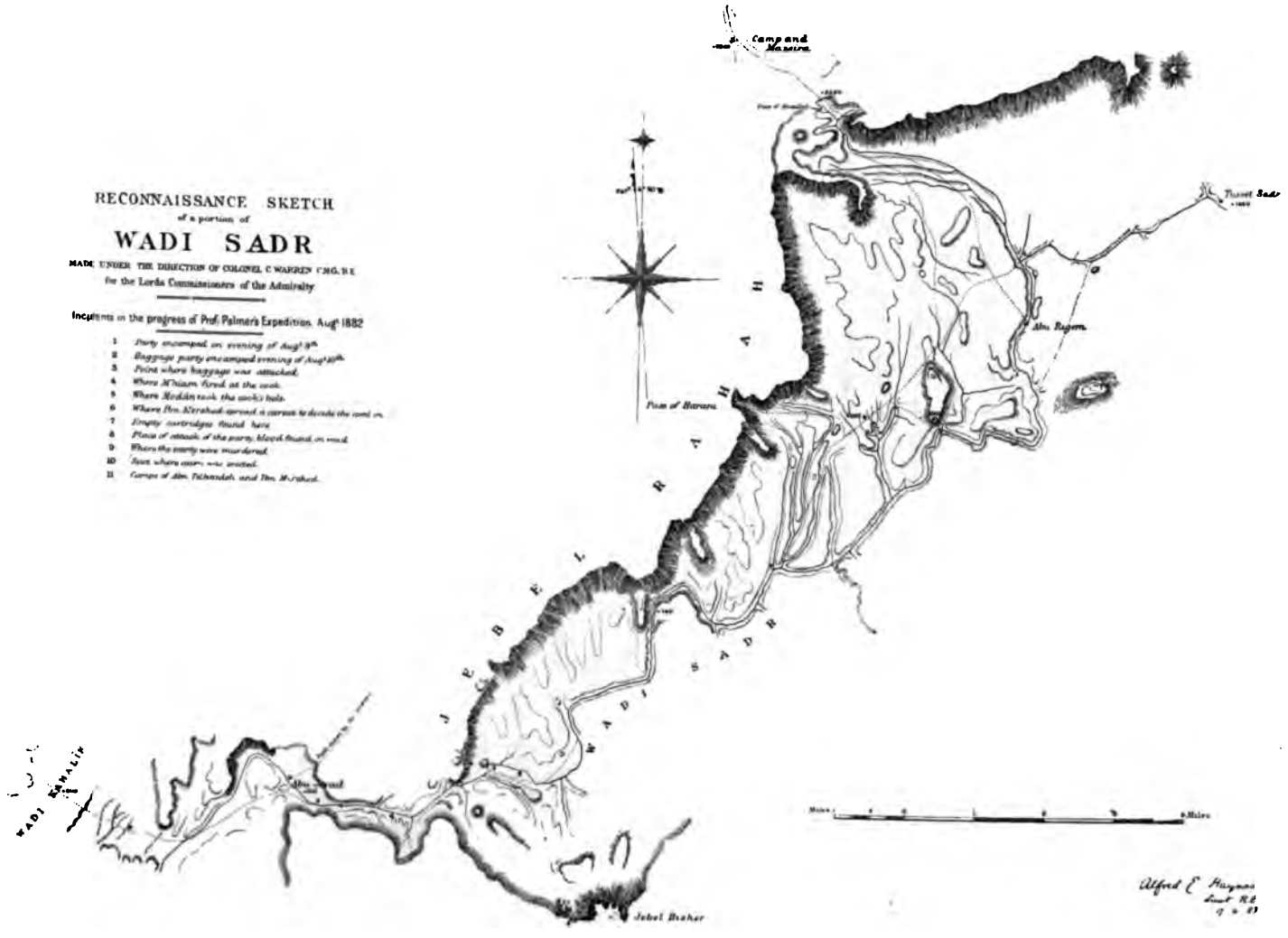
RECONNAISSANCE OF WADI SADR. MR. AND MISS CHARRINGTON VISIT THE SCENE OF MURDER. BUILDING COMMEMORATIVE CAIRN. RETURN TO SUEZ. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TRIAL. ARRIVAL AT CAIRO. TANTA. THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY. COURT-MARTIAL AT ALEXANDRIA. SENTENCE OF COURT. CRITICISM OF HOME PRESS.

FROM information derived from Bedouin whom we had met on our march we now knew that Salâmi Shedîd had left Wadi Sadr, and had gone north to Jebel Magâra in order to make some more arrests. We were thus free to visit Wadi Sadr again, and make our final examination of the ground. It was also desirable that Miss Charrington and Mr. Spencer Charrington, who had been now some time in Egypt, should visit the scene of their brother's death. Our party was consequently split up, Lieutenant Burton going into Suez to escort the Charringtons to the *wadi*, while Colonel Warren and I went there direct.

We visited Wadi Silfeh, where Palmer's camels—that were stolen from his camp at Wadi Kahalîn in order to delay his march—were recovered. We had taken several of Palmer's old camel-drivers with us to tend our camels, and thus had them always handy to give any evidence when required. The *wadi* was sketched as marking one of the incidents of the tragedy. We here first made the acquaintance of the *khamsín* wind, which blows from the

west in this part of the country; it is a warm, stifling wind, full of fine dust which dries up one's skin, and is very unpleasant. Cooking was a difficulty as long as this wind blew, and having sent our cook away, as a useless, troublesome encumbrance, our amateur efforts were rather handicapped.

On January 17th we commenced a compass-survey of Wadi Sadr, making at the same time a careful examination of the ground, which resulted in the discovery of many mementoes of the murdered men. It appears that after the baggage had been looted the bandits assembled at a spot in the *wadi*, where Hassan Ibn Mershed, a Terebîn petty sheik, spread a carpet and invited the men to put their spoil upon it, that a general division might be made. But, like David's young men after the pursuit of the Amalekites, the Bedouin objected to a general division of the spoil, and finally each kept what he had possessed himself of. This place was found, and near it we discovered a quantity of paper, including some official correspondence of Captain Gill, and part of his journal completed up to August 8th, two days before the party were made prisoners. Five months had elapsed since the attack, and yet here were the papers scattered about just as if they had been turned adrift a few days previously. During those five months a good deal of rain had fallen, and that this made no difference was probably owing to the purity of the desert air. The location of the actual site of the ambush was fixed by the finding of a stain of blood on the road which led up to the *wadi*. It seems that one shot at least was fired at the attack, and a camel was wounded and subsequently killed; but though rumour had indicated this from the first, there was always an unaccountable difficulty in getting evidence on the


RECONNAISSANCE SKETCH
of a portion of
WADI SADR
MADE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF COLONEL C WARREN C.M.G. R.E.
for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
Incidents in the progress of Prof. Palmer's Expedition. Augt 1882
1 Party encamped on evening of Augt 9th
2 Baggage party encamped evening of Augt 10th
3 Point where baggage was attacked.
4 Where M'Clean fired at the sack.
5 Where Abdán took the sack(s) bale.
6 Where Dts. Kershaw opened a caravan to divide the contents.
7 Empty cartridges found here
8 Place of attack of the party, blood found on road.
9 Where the party were murdered.
10 Spot where cairn was erected.
11 Camps of Abs. Tehamdah, and Dts. M'Kshed.
Camp and Masura
Thamet Sadr
Abu Rageem
Peak of Barzara
JEBEL RAHAH
WADI SADR
WADI KENALIP
Abu Suwad
Jebel Bruher
Miles
Alfred E Haynes
Lieut R.E.
9 x 83

point. Further down the *wadi* we found a leaf of a note-book of Professor Palmer's, which he probably had with him when attacked; for close to the place of attack we found, some days later, the cover of the book caught in a bush.

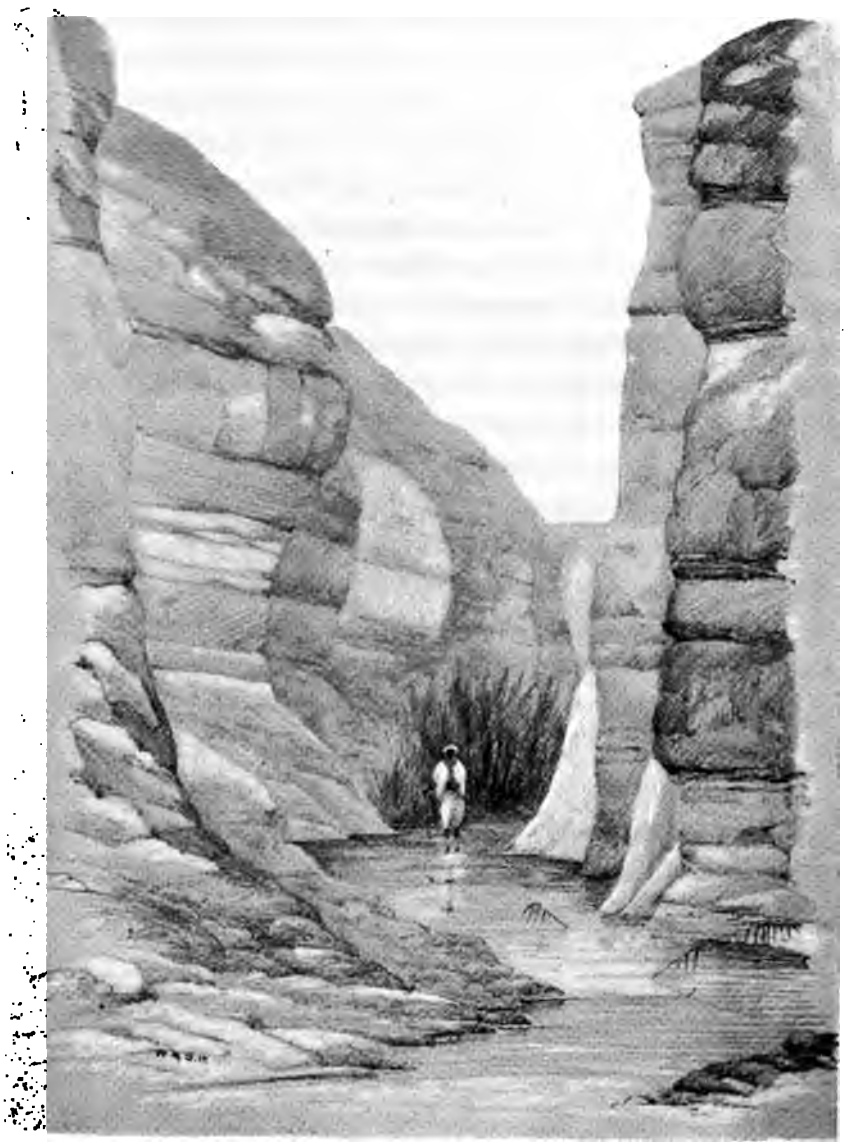
On the surrender of Palmer and his companions, the Bedouin immediately stripped them of their clothes, leaving on them only their under-garments. Professor Palmer and his companions wore the Bedoui dress in more or less completeness; and it is somewhat remarkable that these clothes were, on their capture, at once stripped off. Palmer took pride in being a Bedoui amongst Bedouin, and doubtless carried off the character well; but it is questionable whether this facilitated the work he had in hand. By judicious driving you can work wonders with the so-called wild sons of the desert; but they are too acutely on the watch, how best to serve their own turn, to do much for a Christian on the score of friendship. They appear even to have taken umbrage at Palmer's Bedoui dress, and at once reduced him and his companions to those clothes which did not savour of a Mohammedan personality.

Close to the place of attack there is a sudden drop down of eight feet at the head of a nullah. Here the prisoners were lodged under guard, whilst their captors went to loot the baggage some miles down the *wadi*. We searched this vicinity carefully, hoping to find some scratchings on the rock, or some such token, which the unfortunate men might have left; but we found nothing to reward our search. It was here that Metter Abu Sofia discovered the doomed men when he returned with his sons after his precipitate flight. Finding them under the guard of but two Bedouin, he might

easily have overpowered these with his people, and carried Palmer away to his camp; but no, the old villain must waste time in palavering, in covering Palmer with his own *abba*, and perhaps in an altercation with the man whom he had brought into such *extremis*. What actually passed between Professor Palmer and Metter on this occasion never fully transpired. Metter in evidence said that Palmer spoke only once to him, and then to say, "Metter! Metter!" but it is unlikely that this is all that was said between them. Palmer knew that Metter, or his nephew, was in possession of the money; that he was the friend of the powerful sheiks of the interior; and that, by Bedoui law, he was alone responsible for the safety of the party. Nothing had occurred to free his guide from that responsibility; and Palmer doubtless would have had a good deal to say to him, unless he was by this time fully persuaded that Metter was his betrayer, and would do nothing to aid them.

HAMÎD, ONE OF METTER'S SONS.

From the place of attack a camel-track was found to run off from the road down to the gully where the murder took place. The distance was a little over a mile, and, though very rough, our loaded camels were able to follow it. Down here our unfortunate countrymen were driven in the heat of an August noon. Without boots on their



THE SCENE OF THE MURDER IN WADI SADR.

feet, without hats, and, except for their under-clothes, without any shelter from the burning rays of the sun, they must have reached the scene of their death in a sorry plight; and even if they were conscious of what was occurring, their senses must have been blunted so that they were but half-alive to their impending fate. Those who have experienced the penetrating fierceness of noon-day heat in Arabia, even when protected by all that clothes can do to preserve the skin from its scorching effect, know something of the swimming headiness that is sometimes experienced under these conditions. Wantonly exposed as were Palmer and his companions, the sun must have deadened their feelings and assuaged the pangs of death; and as a man tormented by sea-sickness is said to view approaching shipwreck with equanimity, so it may have been a welcome blow that put an end to suffering that stupefied in its intensity, and which they were powerless to alleviate.

Searching the bottom of the gully, we found no trace of the tragedy, for the waters had been down since our former visit, and besides sweeping the torrent-bed clean, had left numerous pools in the holes at the bottom, thus narrowing our search. On the cliffs above we examined the fire where a pair of trousers that we had found on our first visit had been burnt; we found several buttons which had belonged to the trousers, and were now all that remained distinguishable amongst the ashes. A few days later, when Miss Charrington visited the spot, she was able to say that these buttons were marked with the name of her deceased brother's tailor. We visited the Bedoui camps at Rahah. At the summit of the pass we came upon a long strip of ploughed land, about fifteen to twenty acres in extent, close to where Abu

Telhaideh and Ibn Mershed had had their camp. We found also a broken portmanteau, part of a map, pieces of newspaper, and some empty cartridge-cases for a fowling-piece.

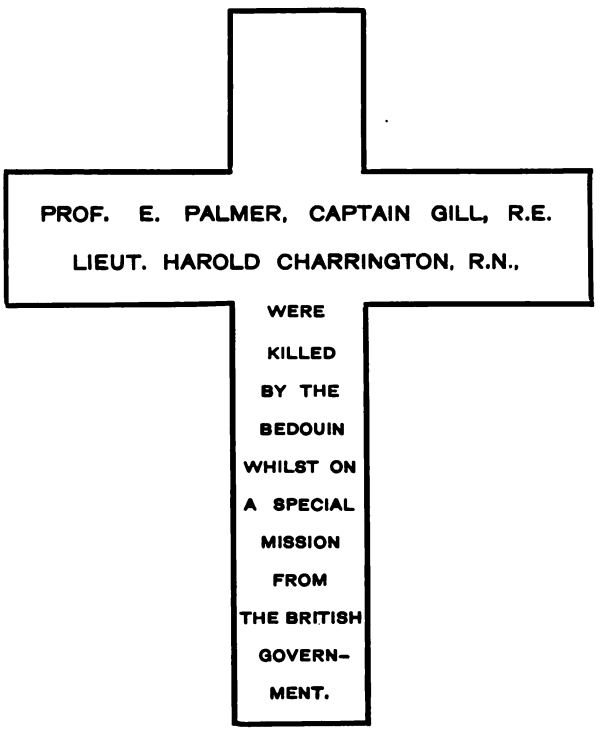
On January 22nd Miss Charrington and her brother arrived. We met them at Ain Abu Jerad, and were able to show them there a Sinaitic inscription. It was carved on a large rock, situated some distance above the water, where a bye road converged upon the *wadi*. The characters

MEMORIAL CAIRN.

were apparently Phœnician, and an impress was taken, as well as a few spare sheets of blotting-paper that we had with us would allow. It is probable that the inscription draws attention to the spring amongst the rocks below, for there being no verdure round it, as there usually is, to mark the vicinity of water, the spring was difficult to find; but I am not aware that it has ever been deciphered.

On the 23rd we arrived at the scene of the murder, and there Colonel Warren read the funeral-service, and, to the amazement of the Bedouin, we fired three volleys of ball-

cartridge into the opposite cliff. Above the gully, on the north side, was a prominent flat-topped hill, and here Miss Charrington selected a site for a cairn of stones. The cairn was seventeen feet in diameter, with sides nearly perpendicular for four and a half feet, then sloping inwards to the apex, which was thirteen feet high. Into the centre was built an oaken cross, on which was cut the following inscription:—



On the back of the cross was carved the names of Harold Charrington, his brother Spencer, and his sister Minnie. A soda-water bottle, with date, &c., was buried in the cairn, and a consecration service was held when it was completed.

The Bedouin were much impressed by our proceedings, and could not understand all the trouble taken on account of men dead and gone. Whether they have respected the monument or no I cannot say, but we did all we could to endow it with sanctity in their eyes. An old Bedoui, who was lying sick in our camp with congestion of the lungs, contributed considerably to the sanctity of the cairn. He gave out one morning that he had dreamed a dream during his sleep, and in his dream he had seen the star Smaiyeh descend from heaven to the gully where the murder was committed, and gathering up the souls of the five men carry them up to the cross. After consecrating the monument, Smaiyeh had taken the souls back to the *wadi*, and returned to its place in the heavens.

The Bedouin with us worked wonderfully well at the cairn. All the stones had to be quarried from the side of the hill and carried up to the top, and we had very few tools to work with. It had been our wish to have an inscription cut in the face of the stone-scarp overlooking the gully—a form of monument more difficult for time or the Bedouin to destroy, than a cairn of loose stones; however, we were unable to arrange for the cutting of the inscription at this time, and, though the proposal was subsequently revived, it has never been put into execution.

Whilst the building of the cairn was proceeding, a Bedoui hiding-place was discovered in a neighbouring *wadi*. Under a cliff a cave had been formed with its mouth built up with stones, so that it served as a store. The entrance was marked by a large square stone, which, on being removed, disclosed a deep cavity in rear. We had some burning bushes thrown in to light up the interior, and saw to our surprise some shining weapons

there. Entering, we found two naval swords, some fragments of clothing which had belonged to Palmer's party, and various other articles. The swords were evidently of a number that Palmer had taken with him into the desert, in order to present them to the Bedoui sheiks he was on his way to meet.

On the 27th we returned to Suez. Salâmi Shedîd was there, looking all the better for his desert excursions. He said he saw no prospect of getting more men for the present, but wanted to wait for a month until the desert got quieter, and the Bedouin returned to their accustomed haunts. He had been unable to do anything with the Terebîn, who had retired to Jebel Hilall, and refused to give up the men of their tribe implicated. He expressed himself as confident of being able to capture the remainder of the men required in time, if they were given the chance to return to their old haunts near Wadi Sadr; he proposed meanwhile to go to Cairo and obtain fresh Bedouin to return with him to the desert. Colonel Warren gave Salâmi a pass, and congratulated him on the increase of energy he had shown during the later portion of his participation in the Search.

The whole of our prisoners had now assembled at Suez. They comprised twelve persons implicated in the attack, the ex-Governor of Nackl, and numerous witnesses. There were several new men who had to be examined, and many points, which had cropped up since our minute examination and survey of the ground, had to be inquired into afresh.

Arrangements for the trial of the prisoners had been the subject of correspondence for some time past, and it was now decided that our prisoners should go to Cairo, where the subsequent steps could be arranged. Our

band of witnesses were thinned down to twenty-five, some twenty others being released, and sent back to the desert to aid in the search for, and capture of, the men still required. Some of our Bedouin had been in detention at Suez for four months, and were much reduced by the unwholesome life of an Egyptian prison. It is a curious and very trying custom that incarcerates in the same prison the willing witness on behalf of the law and the hardened offender awaiting trial. Working, as Colonel Warren always had to do, entirely through the Egyptian officials, there was no option but to have our witnesses imprisoned in the ordinary way; but it nevertheless had a very bad effect on them, enabling them to talk the matter over very thoroughly amongst themselves before they were examined, so that they were prepared to tell us as little as possible. At times, when particular men were brought in, we had to appeal to the Senior British Naval Officer at Suez to be our jailor, so as to avoid their mixing with the other prisoners.

Before leaving Suez, whither we did not expect to return, we had a somewhat lengthy settling up with the numerous individuals we had employed during the progress of the inquiry, and who one and all had the most high-flown expectations of remuneration for their services. We said good-bye to Sheik Mûsa Nusîer with the regret that accompanies a parting between firm and tried friends. Mûsa had throughout behaved towards us with exemplary probity and straightforwardness. In his excellent judgment we could always rely; while his calm suavity and respected personality smoothed over many difficulties, which would, without him, have proved considerable hindrances to our progress. He wanted to accompany Colonel Warren to Cairo; but the Crown Prince of Prussia

was intending to make the journey from Tor to Mount Sinai about this time, and it was most desirable that Mûsa Nusîer should accompany him. So we declined his offer, and with mutual and sincere expressions of goodwill we separated, Sheik Mûsa to return to his peaceful and healthy desert life, we to go to Cairo and fatten on the flesh-pots of the Pharaohs.

On February 3rd we arrived at Cairo, and the next few days were occupied in making arrangements for the trial. It had been decided that the prisoners should be brought before the Tanta Commission, a native court, one of several that had been established in the country for the purpose of trying cases of outrage, &c., which were enacted during the war. At Tanta, which is one of the centres of fanaticism in Egypt, there had been a massacre of Christians during the war, ninety-seven losing their lives. The massacre had been economical, as well as fanatical. Money-lending Greeks and Levantines were murdered to free their debtors, the insolvent Fellahîn. Three Arab butchers slaughtered a Christian butcher who had been guilty of underselling them. The unfortunate victims were hounded about the streets by crowds of turbulent Arabs, and killed in a very brutal manner. Some attempted to take refuge in the mosque, but the doors were shut, and they were murdered on the threshold. Hardly any of the better class of Christians in the place were interfered with by the people, but panic reigned supreme, and, immediately the massacre had been stopped by the supine authorities, most of the surviving Christians were despatched by train to a safer place. It was said that one of these trains was stopped by the Arabs, and the fugitives taken out and laid on the rails, the train being driven over them.

Such acts of savagery, appalling as they are to us, are little regarded by Easterns. In their opinion, the circumstances of death may well be utilised to alleviate the dulness of life. As in the Roman shows, it mattered little how the captives died, so long as their death contributed to the public amusement; so with the Egyptians, the chasing of a Christian through the streets to his death calls forth merely the same feelings with which the average Englishman regards the hunted fox. Retribution, however, was being exacted. On the day we arrived at Tanta five unfortunate wretches were hanged in the streets for participation in the massacres; and while these were by no means the first of the victims of justice, eighty prisoners still remained in prison awaiting trial.

Tanta is a town of about 60,000 people. It lies about the centre of the delta, midway between the Rosetta and Damietta branches of the Nile. There is a fine mosque there dedicated to Seyyid el Bedoui, a popular Moslem saint of the twelfth century. The mosque consists of a large square building of about forty yards a side, open to the sky for the central fifteen yards square. The roof over the remainder rests on pillars, and is prettily decorated in the oriental style. The minarets are about 300 feet high, and from the galleries one gets a fine view of the country round the town. We visited the mosque under a guard of *zaptiehs*, who were very necessary, as several of the more fervid religionists in the place commenced expectorating and cursing at us, and had to be hustled by the *zaptiehs* before they would desist. How long the British troops remained here I do not know, but, although the government of the Khedive was re-established, Tanta, to judge from the demeanour of its people, had little conception that the English were masters of the

country; and the presence of a British garrison there would have been a good ocular demonstration of the new order of things, and had a wholesome effect.

This was one of the few places in Egypt where any trouble was experienced by the Expeditionary Force after the action of Tel el Kebîr. On September 17th, four days

MOSQUE AT TANTA.

after Arabi Pasha's crushing defeat, General Sir Archibald Alison and three hundred of the Gordon Highlanders were despatched by train to Tanta, there being some apprehension that Moslem fanaticism might there break out into renewed disturbance, unless the people were overawed by the presence of British troops. Sir Archibald, the official account tells us, was received at the station of Tanta by the Arabist Governor, who assured him that all was quiet

in the town, and he proceeded with his staff and an escort of twelve men to arrange for the disposition of his force. Passing through the town the English General was conducted to a large open square, where he found himself in the presence of a large force of Arabi's army which had not yet surrendered. The force amounted to some two thousand infantry, four batteries of artillery, and three squadrons of cavalry, all fully equipped; and all round, in the avenues of approach and open spaces, thronged a crowd of excited townspeople. The General sent back to the station for his men, and meanwhile addressed the Egyptian soldiers near him. These knew little of the defeat of Arabi's forces, although presumably the higher officers were well aware of it; and it was all that the twelve Highlanders forming his escort could do to keep the crowd clear of the General and his staff. Whilst Sir Archibald was still speaking, the three companies of Highlanders moved into the square, making their way steadily through the crowd. With the precision and nonchalance of the barrack-square "each company in turn came up and took position, forming three sides of a square, with the General in the centre." The men ordered arms, fixed bayonets, and stood at ease. The condition of affairs being further explained, the whole Egyptian force was induced to lay down their arms to the little band of red-coats in their midst.

Outside the Muderîa, where we were accommodated with rooms, the people demonstrated a somewhat truculent air. We had to get our meals at a Greek restaurant in the town, and invariably wore our uniform and carried arms, on our way backwards and forwards—a precaution which was not unnecessary, for when walking behind Colonel Warren I once noticed a stone, of the size of half a brick, drop on the ground behind his feet.

Some days elapsed and several journeys were taken backwards and forwards to Cairo before the arrangements for the trial could be completed. Something in the air of the East seems to sap the energies out of a man, and renders him casual and unbusinesslike. Our experience led us to the conclusion that it was useless to expect anything to be done at the specified time, unless we were there to see it done ourselves; the arrangements might be made with a care that should have triumphed over all mishaps, and the most unlikely contingencies provided for, but still something would occur to upset everything. When we first left Cairo for Tanta, every necessary official had been interviewed, and all arrangements we imagined were complete. When we arrived at Tanta, and Colonel Warren presented himself before the Commission, the President professed utter ignorance of our mission there. If we had prisoners they could come on for trial in the ordinary course; but the prisons were full of people who had a prior claim to the attention of the law. This, however, would not do, and with the aid of Major Macdonald,* an attaché of the Consul-General's, the President was brought to his bearings, and the trial arranged for next day. Next day, before anything could be done, a telegram arrived relieving the President of his duties, and suspending the Commission until the appointment of a successor. Colonel Warren had seen enough of Egyptian officialdom to know the futility of waiting events at Tanta, and repaired at once to Cairo, returning next morning with a new President, Zekki Pasha. Now we expected to be able to proceed, but our expectations were doomed to disappointment. In settling the legal preliminaries it was found that Colonel

* Now Sir Claud Macdonald, H.M. Commissioner for the Oil Rivers Territory, West Coast of Africa.

Warren, having conducted the preliminary inquiry, was ineligible for the position of prosecutor, which it had been the wish of the English Government that he should occupy; Burton was accordingly appointed in his place, while Colonel Warren watched the case on behalf of the English Government. Finally, when all else was ready one of the members was found to have repaired to Cairo, and Burton had to be sent after him to bring him back.

The Tanta Commission consisted of a President and two Members. It was the business of the Commission to take the evidence of the witnesses, in fact, do all but proceed to sentence, this being reserved for the mixed Court-martial sitting at Alexandria—a method of safeguarding the unfortunate Fellah from the too drastic methods of justice in vogue in the East. Egyptian law is based on the Code Napoleon, and its methods are much less ponderous than English legal procedure. The method of taking the evidence was something as follows:—A witness would be brought before the Court and questioned by the President in a few preliminary queries to mark the individuality of the witness. This part generally gave rise to some amusement, for a Bedoui never by any chance knew his age, and when asked his trade had nothing to say but that he wandered about from place to place, when the President would grunt out "Ah! Vagrant! Pig!" The witness would then be told to say all he knew about the matter in hand; after which the President would address a few questions. In the case of the accused, the procedure was the same, except that, at the end of the questioning, the President would generally address to the accused some such speech as the following: "Now it appears that you have told a great many lies, in fact, you are about the biggest scoundrel I ever came across. What have you got to say to that?" However,

these denunciations were little noticed, being apparently the expected mode of address, from one so immaculate and unapproachable as the little judge, towards one of the children of Ishmael. In the case of a prisoner who had previously made a regularly attested confession, he was merely called into Court and his confession read out. If he assented to it, it was recorded as evidence without further delay. If, however, the confession included avowal of murder, or any crime which would entail capital punishment, the President asked the prisoner three times whether he was guilty of the crime stated or not, before the confession could be accepted by the Court as valid. Colonel Warren, who was allowed to make suggestions to the judge during the progress of the Court, managed to get the bare confessions of the prisoners supplemented by the evidence of the witnesses we had brought with us, so as to make sure of the part taken by each delinquent, and satisfy the more exacting ideas of law inherent in English minds.

MERCEH EL RASHDEH—ONE OF THE MURDERERS.

The province of the Tanta Commission being to report to the Court-martial, on the strength of which report the Court would proceed to its sentence, it was necessary that the evidence of the numerous witnesses we had collected should all be recorded, thus representing the case somewhat in the clearness and detail evolved during the preliminary inquiry. As it was, five days were found sufficient to dispose of the whole case, including charges against thirteen prisoners implicated more or less in the outrage, and the names, in various grades of complicity, of twelve

other men who were still at large, but concerning whom it was desirable to record evidence while the witnesses were at hand. After the fifth day the Commission was closed to prepare their report and deliberate on their recommendations to the superior tribunal.

On the 18th of February, at Alexandria, whither we had meanwhile removed with the prisoners, the case was brought on before the Court Martial. The Court was composed of six or eight members, in the fashion of the mixed tribunals Egypt has so long had to put up with. There was considerable interest evinced in the case, amongst the spectators being General Harman, the general in command of H.M. troops at Alexandria, and Captain Fitzroy, R.N., the Senior Naval Officer.

Chefik Bey, one of the two members of the Tanta Commission, acted as prosecutor, and in a lucid speech disclosed the salient features of the case and the charges which were brought against each of the prisoners. The latter were then duly arraigned. The Court, after a short discussion, proceeded to pass sentence on the prisoners as follows:—

Salem Sheyk ...	Sentenced to death.			
Salâmi Abu Telhaideh				
Salem Abu Telhaideh				
Ali Shwair				
Merceh el Rashdeh ...				
Salâmi Ibn Aîd (Metter's nephew)	Sentenced	15	years'	imprisonment
Mohammed Arthûn ...	,,	10	,,	,,
Murshed Ibn Said ...	,,	5	,,	,,
Aîd Ibn Salem M'Haisen				
Salâmi Abu Owardeh...				
Aîd Abu Rigal ...				
Salim Sulman	,,	3	,,	,,

Ali Effendi, the ex-Governor of Nackl, was sentenced to be discharged from the service and to suffer a year's imprisonment with hard labour. The property of the Sofîa family was also confiscated to the State, to make good the money stolen from Professor Palmer.

This confiscation of property was justified by the facts of the case, but I do not know if any refund of money has been made to the national coffers thereby. If not, it is most probable that the sentence of the Court has been utilized by the sheiks to plunder Metter Sofîa's family, and thus compensate themselves for their out-of-pocket expenses connected with the Inquiry.

SALÂMI IBN AÎD (METTER'S NEPHEW), WHO ESCAPED WITH PALMER'S MONEY.

The Bedouin sentenced to death were sent to Zagazig, where they were to be executed in the presence of a sheik and two Bedouin from every tribe in lower Egypt, some thirty-three in all. It was arranged with the Egyptian Government that they should not be executed until we returned from El Arîsh, whither Colonel Warren now proposed to go, to endeavour to open up personal communication with the Terebîn sheiks of the desert, and to inquire into the conduct of the ex-Governor Said Effendi, a noted Arabist. There had been rumours of the latter's participation

in Palmer's capture and death, and that he sent out a party of Sowârki horsemen to make him prisoner. He had consequently been held over, at the time of the trial of the rebel leaders at Cairo, so that his complicity in Palmer's death might be inquired into.

The work of the Palmer Search-Expedition being now to a great extent finished, it could not be but that comments, which up to that time had been generally laudatory to the methods employed by, and the success achieved by Colonel Warren, now changed to criticism and depreciation of the value of the work done. The case had been imperfectly elucidated, said the comfortably-chaired, home critic. The witnesses had been bullied in an unfeeling way; men had been condemned on their own confession; and lastly, Shedîd had escaped. To all of which criticism one must give a qualified assent. It is in the nature of human affairs to be imperfect. But it is questionable whether the critic, or anyone else, could have done the work better, and have taken greater pains and care to elucidate the facts of the mystery in which the fate of Professor Palmer and his companions were involved than Colonel Warren did.

The accusation of bullying and unfeeling treatment of our prisoners is on a par with the petitions for pardon that follow many of the condemnations of notorious criminals in our Courts at home. The Bedouin themselves were well assured of Colonel Warren's probity and straight dealing, and recognised in that the truest tenderness; and to the end, their demeanour towards us, even of those accused of the capital crime, was never that of men suffering any hardship at our hands, but rather as if we were the only people in the world to whom their welfare was of any importance. Colonel Warren never treated the Bedouin with undue harshness; and

although he had frequently to be severe with the sheiks, and often found it necessary to wound their somewhat over-refined susceptibilities in order to get them to do what they were told, in the peculiar nature of the work this could not be avoided. Above all else he had to impress on everyone he came in contact with his absolute sincerity and determination that the perpetrators of the crime, and they only, should suffer punishment; although, as a matter of fact, all the Bedouin of the desert were accessories to the murder after the act, and deserved little consideration at the hands of Englishmen.

To the contention that these men were condemned on their own confession, one may answer that such is the Mohammedan law, which exacts that no man shall be executed until he confesses the crime for which he is condemned: besides the confessions were but the result of the previous inquiry, which had established the guilt of the culprits beyond all doubt, and in far greater elaboration than the Egyptian laws either required, or were accustomed to.

That Shedîd was not implicated by the inquiry one cannot but rejoice at, for there was no case against him. On the contrary, the evidence all went to show that Shedîd was too astute and too little tarred with the brush of fanaticism to have compassed intentionally, when to no purpose, the massacre of Christians. The order Shedîd issued, under Arabi's command, to make prisoners of all Christians who should enter the desert, may be construed as a mere act of the rebel-party in Egypt, on a par with any other measure they took to forward their cause by force of arms; and although to charge them with not preventing the murder committed by their tribesmen might pass current in Turkey, it would be little in accordance

with English notions of right and wrong. Besides, whereas Ibrahim Shedîd was the head-sheik during the war, he died before our inquiry took active shape; and we had to deal with his son, Salâmi Shedîd, who could scarcely have been made responsible for his father's misdeeds, even had those misdeeds been established.

CHAPTER XII.

MISSION TO EL ARÎSH. DEPARTURE FROM ALEXANDRIA IN H.M.S. "DECOY." LANDING AT EL ARÎSH. THE *WADI*, TOWN, AND POPULATION OF EL ARÎSH. SITUATION OF AFFAIRS WHEN WE ARRIVED. CASE OF RACHEED HADDÎD. GOVERNMENT VESTED IN BEKKA EFFENDI. INQUIRING INTO CASES OF BASTINADOING, &C. THE SOWÂRKI SHEIKS. INIQUITIES OF MUSTAPHA MAMNOON'S GOVERNMENT. HIS ORDER FOR OUR DETENTION. THE SUSPENSION OF THE GOVERNOR. ENDEAVOURS TO APPROACH THE TEREBÎN SHEIKS. DEPARTURE FROM EL ARÎSH. WADI EL ARÎSH. GATIÉ. THE SAND-HILL COUNTRY. ARRIVAL AT EL KANTÂRA.

LEAVING the criminals in Government custody, with orders that capital punishment should not be proceeded with until further orders, Colonel Warren turned his attention to El Arîsh.

Early in the year there had been received from the Governor of El Arîsh a watch and chain of Professor Palmer's, and a pair of boots supposed to be the property of one of his party—which articles had been obtained from the Bedouin in that vicinity. El Arîsh had hitherto not been reached by the Search-Expedition, and it was felt that something further might be done from that point. It had been a place of considerable importance during the war, being a transmitting station of the telegraph-line between El Kantâra on the Canal and Gaza in Syria; and, being held by a warm adherent of Arabi, who had spared

no pains in stirring up a feeling of enmity to Christians amongst the Bedouin, it had played no inconsiderable part in the desert. But it was as a medium of intelligence, *viâ* the telegraph-line to Europe, that El Arîsh had its chief effect during the war; and Captain Gill, R.E., when he went with Palmer on his fatal expedition, had as his primary object to sever this line of communication, and took with him explosives for the demolition of the line, intending to cut it at some distance from the Canal. Gill's mission remained unfulfilled, and on August 19th, the day the Canal-plant was taken in charge by the Navy, the wire was cut near El Kantâra. This cut, however, was insufficient to completely sever this line of communication, for the Bedouin could cross the Canal pretty much as they pleased during the war, and intelligence could be forwarded from El Arîsh; and on September 10th, Colonel Warren, then at Tor, had suggested the occupation of the place by a small party. Notwithstanding this, it remained unoccupied, even after the collapse of Arabi, although the Governor was relieved and succeeded by Mustapha Mamnoon, an adherent of the Khedive; the ex-Governor being detained in prison at Cairo, until he should be cleared of certain charges made against him of complicity in the attack upon, and subsequent murder of, Palmer and his companions.

El Arîsh is situated in the country of the Sowârki Bedouin, of whom Arabi Pasha was said to have requisitioned four thousand to five thousand men during the war; therefore this tribe was presumably of considerable importance in the question of coercing the Terebîn, who were still, from their fastness of Jebel Hilâll, defying our endeavours at arresting the guilty parties of their tribe. The idea that the Sowârki could

supply such a number of fighting-men was, however, purely apocryphal; and, with further experience of that tribe, we found no reason to alter our estimate (*vide* p. 203), which gave the Sowârki tribe at a strength of four hundred fighting-men.

We embarked at Alexandria on board H.M.S. *Decoy*, on the afternoon of the 23rd. We were equipped with stores for a six weeks' expedition into the desert, for Colonel Warren could not be sure into what action the departure might lead us. We took with us Selim Mosalli, our interpreter, and three Bedouin as servants, intending to get camels and an escort at El Arîsh, for any desert journeys that were necessary. The gunboat had some difficulty in passing the bar of Alexandria harbour, but this was accomplished before dark, and we were soon steaming along to the eastward, a heavy north-west wind blowing, which helped us along, although it made the *Decoy* dance, much to the discomfort of some of its occupants.

As long as the wind blew from the north-west it would be impossible to land at El Arîsh, as being on the open beach the surf would be too high; however, early in the morning of the 25th the wind shifted to the south, and after some little trouble the point of disembarkation was found, and we prepared to land. This was the first visit paid by one of our ships to El Arîsh since the outbreak of the war, and it is to some extent a matter for legitimate surprise why it should not have been visited before, and the inhabitants given an ocular demonstration of the power of the Khedive's supporters. But the coast is an inhospitable one, consisting of a shallow, shelving foreshore, keeping vessels at a distance; and a screen of sand-hills, palms and scrub, effectually hides the town from the

sea. The exaggerated estimate of the power of the Bedouin possibly contributed also to prevent the committing of small bodies of blue-jackets to independent action ashore, except where definite results were to be obtained thereby.

As our projected landing proceeded and the boats neared the shore, considerable stir was created amongst the Arabs on the beach, and they lined a trench which we subsequently found had been prepared with the intention

THE SHORE NEAR EL ARÎSH, WHERE WE LANDED.

of resisting a landing. The surf was running high, the waves breaking far out from shore, leaving within them a broad belt of comparatively smooth water, in which the boats could easily float. We all got ducked, the boats themselves narrowly escaping capsize; but after several attempts we got safe through the breakers into the smooth water within, where we lay, and hailed the Arabs on shore. They showed little desire for closer intercourse, but after some time they took courage, and came down the beach into the water, gradually drawing closer and closer; when they learnt that seven of us wished to land and visit

El Arîsh, they came up to the boats and carried us on their backs to the shore. On shore we were at once surrounded by a crowd of unruly Arabs, who, filled with curiosity at our appearance, were with difficulty made to keep their distance. Colonel Warren spoke to them, endeavouring to instil some confidence as to our intentions, and urged them to go back into the water to the boats and fetch our baggage. This, however, they refused to do, and matters were at a dead lock, when an individual in uniform, who turned out to be a minor official of the garrison, arrived. Colonel Warren tackled him at once, and ordered him to send for the Governor, and get the Arabs to bring our things ashore. A messenger was accordingly despatched to the town, and, after a great deal of gesticulation and excited dialogue between this official and the Arabs, our stores were brought ashore from the boats.

It had been necessary for us to wear our uniforms for landing to ensure recognition of our status; and our kit was none the better for the ducking we had received. Spread upon the dry sand, under the hot mid-day sun, our clothes were soon dry, however, and a little trouble made our weapons serviceable again. When our trunks and store-cases came ashore these had to be turned out and emptied of salt water, a quantity of the stores being destroyed in the ducking they had experienced. After about an hour a number of officials arrived from the town, and every one seeming to be amiably inclined, we sent a message to the *Decoy* not to wait for us any longer, and set about getting transport to convey our things to the town of El Arîsh. Camels for the baggage and riding-horses were soon obtained, and we started off.

Our way lay through the garden-lands, with which Wadi el Arîsh is covered at its mouth. No water was

seen here at the surface, but it is found a few feet down; and numerous shallow wells with *shadoofs* were dotted about, reminding one of the delta of Egypt. The sand-hills impinge upon the *wadi* on its western side, and are slowly straitening the limits of the cultivated portion. The fort and town of El Arîsh lie upon some elevated ground between one and two miles from the sea. The town is a collection of clay-huts, housing some three or four thousand people, and is entirely dominated by the fort—an imposing structure (though somewhat dilapidated) some eighty-yards square, with walls some twenty-feet high, loopholed, and provided with a *chemin-de-fer* for firing through their crenelated tops. The government rests in a governor, who is assisted by a *bash-cateb* and several clerks. There is also a quarantine establishment. The garrison of the fort is composed of thirty regular soldiers under two officers of the Egyptian Artillery, and twenty camel-men under a sheik. These latter are permanencies, but the regulars are periodically relieved.

The people of El Arîsh are of a very distinctive type. They have light-brown hair, blue eyes, and an open, fair countenance, contrasting with the dark, lowering faces of the Egyptians. They are said to be of Bosnian extraction, and were planted here by Mohammed Ali, probably to strengthen this his frontier-depot: one cannot but think, however, that these fine, stalwart descendants of the Bosnian mountaineers are wasted at El Arîsh, as they could not easily be wasted elsewhere. Until recent years El Arîsh, as the chief station on the trade-route between Syria and Egypt, had considerable importance, and the people owned a great number of camels for transport-running. But now trade prefers the sea-route from Jaffa to Port Said, and the overland route, and with it El Arîsh

THE FORT AND TOWN OF EL ARÎSH.

has dwindled in importance. The town is now painfully isolated, and separated from Syria by forty miles of desert, from Egypt by a hundred miles, is solely important as a transmitting-station of the telegraph-line, and as a point of civilisation and government in the desert. The population is divided into families or groups, each under a sheik, and over them all is a head-sheik. Religion and civil justice is personified in the person of the *Cadi*, a man of great reputed sanctity and learning. The people are quiet and unfanatical, and refused to molest the Christians living in the town during the war, though constantly egged on to do so by the governor and his officers. They trade in the produce of their gardens and orchards, for calico, &c., and apparently are a very contented people, living—except for the presence of government officials in their midst—a contented, Utopian existence. In ordinary times they pay no regular taxes, but, doubtless, have their full share of extraordinary requisitions to fulfil according as the governor and his subordinates are pleased to demand.

At the time of our arrival affairs were in a most complicated condition at El Arîsh. The new Turkish governor, Mustapha Mamnoon, who had been roughly treated in Egypt during the ascendancy of Arabi, had taken advantage of his isolated position at El Arîsh to institute a perfect reign of terror in the place. Of this we knew nothing at the time of our arrival, but Colonel Warren, always preferring, if practicable, to take these places by surprise, chose to go to El Arîsh by sea, so as to come unawares on the people without preparations being made for his reception. Unfortunately for the governor, he had chosen this very time to leave the place; and thus his delinquencies were exposed, though he had

taken all precaution to secure his own position and a continuance of his policy during his absence by placing his son in command of the fort in his place. This he did, notwithstanding the fact that the Dukolìa (the Department in which El Arîsh is situated) had refused to accept his son as acting-governor, and had sent A., a lieutenant of artillery, to take command as *wakil* during his absence. However, Mamnoon ignored these instructions, and wrote to say that nothing had been heard of A., though he had actually arrived and had been placed in a subordinate position as third lieutenant of the fort. Thus, when we arrived, Hassan Effendi, the son of Mustapha Mamnoon, was fraudulently acting as governor, while the real acting-governor, who was quite unaware of his position as *wakil*, was acting as third officer of the fort.

The first act of Mustapha Mamnoon on arrival at the fort as governor had been to state that he was irresponsible, and that he had an agreement with H.H. the Khedive and the Dukolîa to act exactly as he thought fit; he proceeded accordingly to rule with the most barbarous severity, taking measures to make it almost impossible that his unlawful acts should become known to the administration. He administered the bastinado freely in the Queen's name, which so embittered and alarmed the people against the English, that on our arrival we were treated as enemies, and the women actually dug holes in their gardens and hid all their ornaments, so much alarmed were they at the arrival of three British officers. It was impossible for us to avoid noticing that there was some peculiarity about the people of the place in their relation to us, but we could not tell what it signified; it only appeared as though there was a very intense feeling against us among all. The acting-governor, Hassan Effendi, insisted upon our

coming to stay in the fort, and, taking us over it, pointed out where our tents were to be and the rooms where we might live; but Colonel Warren had no idea of being quietly made prisoner of in this manner, and ordered our tent to be put up some four hundred yards outside the walls on the north side, and requested a guard of three soldiers for the night.

The acting-governor paid us a visit in the evening and inquired what our mission was. We had no credentials or papers to show who we were, but he appeared to be well disposed, and, at Colonel Warren's instance, a summons was sent to the Sowârki sheiks ordering them to come to El Arîsh to confer with Colonel Warren. A severe gale was now blowing, and the tents were with great difficulty kept standing. Our dinner was a very gritty one, the air being thick with sand, and we took it in the lulls of the storm when the tent did not require holding up. About 8 p.m., as we were occupied struggling with the tent-pole and guy-ropes, wondering how long we could stand this kind of work, our tent was invaded by a young man who seemed in the last stage of desperation, and begged and entreated for assistance in Arabic, English, and French. We were not aware that anyone in the place could talk English, thus his appearance was a complete surprise, and it was some time before we could make out who he could be. He turned out to be the telegraph-clerk, a Syrian, named Racheed Haddîd. He had been severely beaten on our landing by the acting-governor's servant, because he had not given notice of our coming—which, of course, he was unable to do as he had received no notice himself. Such action on the part of the servant could only have sprung from the master, and occurring at this moment, it was a very serious act of intimidation, and showed

that Hassan Effendi was not disposed to be on straight terms. Colonel Warren feeling it all the more necessary to endeavour to patch up the matter, made light of it, and suggested that the governor could not possibly be aware of his servant's act, and would, doubtless, take early steps to settle the matter. The boy Racheed —our visitor did not appear more than a boy—showed several severe contusions on his body which had all the appearance of fresh wounds; and from his tremulous, excited state it was evident that he had been severely handled.

Next morning, February 26th, we were much fatigued by our efforts to defeat the wind during the night. Colonel Warren sent up to the governor and asked what steps he had taken with reference to the case of Racheed, the beating of whom had come to his notice. A courteous reply was received, saying that the matter would be fully inquired into, which reply was accompanied with an invitation to dinner at the fort. Colonel Warren accepted the invitation, and arming carefully, we went up to the fort, Colonel Warren instructing us not to lose sight of our weapons, as he had suspicions that all was not correct at El Arîsh. On our arrival at the fort the guard turned out under the command of the acting-governor, and presented arms, while Bekka Effendi, the second officer, received us and took us into the fort. Here we were well received, the resources of the culinary department being strained by the provision of a very oily repast in our honour.

The gale—here on shore called the *khamsîn* wind—blew stronger and stronger, and during the morning there came reports that the *Decoy* had been seen off the shore in distress. This was incorrect, as we ascertained

afterwards, for she ran before the gale to Cyprus and took shelter behind the island; but it is the style of thing that does in lieu of news in the East. In the evening we pitched our tent anew under shelter of a sand-bank, as it was blowing a hurricane.

We went to see Racheed early in the morning of the 27th, and found him lying in bed, suffering from the effects of the ill-treatment he had received. As nothing had been done to compensate him or deal with the case in any way, Colonel Warren determined to report the matter to Sir Edward Malet. We got Racheed up to send the telegram, Colonel Warren being particularly anxious to send it before he paid the acting-governor a visit, for Hassan Effendi would probably appeal to his clemency, in order to prevent the matter going any further, and it would save trouble to clinch matters at once by making a report to head-quarters. Subsequently we paid a visit to the fort to make a formal inquiry into the action of the acting-governor in Racheed's case. It was found that the man who had committed the assault was in prison, but the case had not been investigated. Hassan Effendi pleaded that he had not power to dispose of such cases, and this one must wait until his father returned to his government. However, finally he came to his senses, apologised for his inaction, which he attributed to lack of experience, and promised to investigate the case at the earliest opportunity. These good intentions resulted in the culprit getting a severe flogging for the trouble he had occasioned his master.

The continuance of the hurricane forced us to strike our camp during the day and take refuge in the town in Bekka Effendi's house, which he kindly placed at our disposal. We were here better able to get on with our

inquiry as to the action of Said Effendi, the Arabist governor, during the war. Colonel Warren's persistent and successful demand for justice in the case of the assault on Racheed had an excellent effect on the various people of the town whom we examined; and as these gained confidence we discovered, little by little, that the existing state of affairs, under Mustapha Mamnoon Bey, was far worse than anything which existed prior to his arrival. Said Effendi had, indeed, been an energetic and fanatical supporter of Arabi, but the Christians in the town were not ill-treated by him, beyond being put under contribution as he thought they were squeezable. But Mustapha Mamnoon far exceeded Said in general and systematical oppression. Many cases of gross tyranny and cruelty were daily discovered, and in all these Bekka Effendi, now our host, must have played a consenting, if not an active, part.

Next day, the gale still continuing, confined us to the house and town. Telegraphic communication with El Kantâra, which had been interrupted the previous afternoon, was reopened, and an order came for the governor's son, Hassan Effendi, to at once surrender the government into the hands of Bekka Effendi, the senior officer of the fort. This latter, an alert, bright-eyed, little soldier, who, being unable to read and write, had before been considered ineligible to hold the command of the fort, had now the task of resisting Colonel Warren's inquiry into several alleged cases of tyranny, illegal bastinadoing and flogging, during the last few months. He did his duty to his absent master well; and, though he allowed that the governor might have playfully flicked with his cane a few culprits who had been brought before him, he insisted that such a direct transgression of the Khedive's decree as bastinadoing

never for a moment would have been allowed under so exact and punctilious a *régime* as that of Mustapha Mamnoon.

We investigated a great number of allegations, and were often foiled in endeavouring to drive our case home; but one morning in the *Mahafza* Colonel Warren sent for two clerks whom we had ascertained had lately been bastinadoed, and examined the soles of their feet. The skin was marked and scarred, as by a severe bastinadoing recently administered; but, on being questioned, they insisted they knew nothing of being bastinadoed. Colonel Warren turned to one of the attendant soldiers and told him to fetch the tourniquet, an instrument by which the feet of the subject to be bastinadoed are secured. The man thinking apparently that another castigation was to take place, and eager for the fun, hurried away before Bekka Effendi could interfere, and immediately returned with the instrument of torture. Colonel Warren roughly ordered one of the clerks to be seized and put on the ground for a bastinadoing, and the *kourbash* to be brought. Bekka, somewhat mystified, gave the necessary orders, and the clerk was soon on his stomach with his feet held up by two soldiers, while another stood by with the *kourbash* ready to administer correction at the Colonel's command. On these occasions, in the event of the subject struggling violently, another man sits on his back and pinions his arms. All details of the barbarous punishment were explained and exemplified, except the actual castigation, and the clerk was then released, to his own relief certainly, but to the evident disappointment of the soldiers. Colonel Warren then turning to Bekka Effendi congratulated him on the perfection of drill shown by his subordinates, and expressed surprise that a soldier of his standing should

continue to place himself in a false position for the sake of defending Mustapha Mamnoon, who had illegally abused his power as governor to such an unjustifiable extent. From this moment Colonel Warren was virtually governor of El Arîsh, and Bekka Effendi realised that he must give assistance in our inquiries, or he too would he liable to get into trouble.

There was little to be done in respect to the particular business of the Palmer Search-Expedition, for the Sowârki sheiks had not yet arrived; it was, moreover, particularly important that El Arîsh should be put in a satisfactory state, so that it could be used as a safe base for the operations which Colonel Warren wished to initiate against the Terebîn. We heard that the Terebîn, who had been gathered at Jebel Hilall while we were at Nackl, had now dispersed, going to their ploughing-lands in Syria; and it was quite probable that after placing things at El Arîsh on a satisfactory basis we would go to Syria and visit Colonel Warren's old friend Yusuf Effendi, the Turkish Governor of Gaza, so as to obtain his assistance.

On March 3rd, the gale having abated, we pitched our tents again, and moved into them, very glad to be able to vacate the stifling, dark habitation we had been living in. The Sowârki sheiks arrived, and were interviewed by the Colonel. They were stupid old men, and had nothing to suggest as to our going to Jebel Hilall. They rode charming little Arab horses, and their get up, as the first Bedoui tribe we had met that used horses, was interesting. They were told of the matter we had come about, of their complicity as desert Bedouin in the crime of their neighbouring tribesmen, and of the obligation that lay upon them to do all to assist us in our search. Escorts would be required of them, &c. To all this they could do

nothing but shake their heads, talking and gesticulating now and then in an entirely irrelevant manner, like tremulous but obstinate old ladies, oppressed by the idea that they are being done. There was nothing possible but to chaff them, and unlike most Bedouin, who are quick to recognise humour, this only made them the more stupid; so inquiries were made whether some younger and more active head-men could not be produced, with whom some action might be arranged. This request subsequently produced Salâmi Arâdi, a fine, lithe, active fellow, thoroughly typical of competent Bedoui rascality, and a good fellow to boot. He accompanied us when we left El Arîsh, and thoroughly redeemed the character of the Sowârki tribesmen in our opinion.

Evidence had been meanwhile accumulating against Mustapha Mamnoon. We found that he had been systematically oppressing the people in a thoroughly Turkish style; and this all in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, whom he represented as the rapacious conqueror of a down-trodden people. Bastinadoing had been constantly used contrary to the law, and no entries or reports made to proper authority. People had been imprisoned to suit the governor's pleasure, forbidden to meet to read the Koran, for the ceremonies of marriage, circumcision, or burial, or even for social purposes in their own houses. The governor had spies all over the town, and often, without any warning, people would be seized, and taken before him to account for some trivial offence or crime hatched against them in the fertile brain of the governor or his subordinates. The soldiers were encouraged to behave so that they were a terror to the people; and, in short, this little township, which had of itself all the elements which should have secured to it a happy

hum-drum existence, was cursed by all the hideous characteristics of a reign of terror. In the intervals when the line was open (for the storm constantly interrupted telegraphic communication) Colonel Warren forwarded to Cairo the more important details as they came to light. As Mamnoon was at the time at Cairo, it was probable that these reports would be referred to him, or reach his ears in some manner. Thus it was likely that he would shortly return to his government, to stop the revelations into his administration; and on March 3rd, whilst we were in the telegraph-office of El Arîsh, a message arrived from Mamnoon, from El Kantâra, the next station towards Egypt, for his son to go to our end of the wire to speak to him. A reply was sent, by Colonel Warren's instructions, to the effect that this could not be allowed.

The near approach of the governor had, however, a great effect on the demeanour of the garrison and people of the town. They evidently had a lively imagination of Mamnoon's vengeance when he should regain his government, and be able, untrammelled, to work his will upon them. We were somewhat apprehensive ourselves how far matters were likely to go on the return of Mamnoon. He was evidently a man of courage, determination, and brutality, and would stop at nothing for the furtherance of his own ends; and with full control over the telegraph office, the transport of the district, guides, supplies, &c., and with unlimited (in comparison with our small party) physical force to serve his ends, it was more than possible that we might come off second best.

These feelings were intensified in the evening by a statement by Bekka Effendi, who was dining with us, that telegraphic orders had that day arrived from Mamnoon at El Kantâra to the acting-governor, to the

effect that we were to be detained until he arrived at El Arîsh, to which he was coming as quickly as his camels could carry him. Such an order was tantamount to making prisoners of us, and we observed that the guard of soldiers that had that evening again mounted over our tents was unwontedly vigilant, and suspicious of our movements. Bekka Effendi, too, appeared to be much concerned for his own prospects, when the governor should return and find his subordinate had failed in efficiently defending his superior's interests; and evidently was regretting that he had identified himself with our proceedings in any way.

After Bekka Effendi had retired, we held council together as to how we could give Mamnoon the slip and escape on foot to Gaza; but we soon saw that this would be impracticable, as it was certain that the Bedouin in Mustapha Mamnoon's pay could catch us up before we were many miles away. Moreover, there was the difficulty about Racheed Haddîd; it was certain death to him if we left him behind, and yet we could not take him with us without disorganizing the telegraphic communication between Egypt and Europe. Besides this there was the possibility that Mustapha Mamnoon had sent the telegram for the very purpose of putting us into a false position. He evidently meant mischief, as his whole prospects in life were at stake, and from his unscrupulous character it was clear he would stop at nothing to gain his ends. Colonel Warren looked upon the situation in a very serious light, for if he once arrived and took over the command, Mustapha Mamnoon would be able to get us into some difficulty—which he could easily do by means of either the soldiers of the fort or the Bedouin—and then, when we were *in extremis*, he could appear as our

deliverer and help us out on condition that we should condone his offences, and our condition might be such that we would be glad to do so. Our investigation of Mamnoon's methods of government made us determined never to place ourselves in his power; a determination which now found its only action in the careful overhauling of our revolvers and rifles, which were very foul from the sand of the recent storm.

Next morning, March 4th, a messenger was sent early to the fort to ascertain whether there was any news of Mustapha Mamnoon, and it was elicited that he was expected about mid-day on the 5th. It soon became evident, from the way in which we were shadowed by the soldiers, that we were prisoners, and some sharp action was necessary or we should surrender our liberty. When this was quite clear, Colonel Warren thought it time to act, and sent up an order to the fort to say he would inspect the garrison, which was to be ready to receive him, at 10 a.m. At the time appointed we went up to the fort in uniform and fully armed. The soldiers turned out, and Colonel Warren inspected them with all ceremony. This done, he told Bekka Effendi to assemble all the officials and sheiks of the town. Taken somewhat by surprise, Bekka Effendi complied, although with some show of reluctance. But there was a further surprise in store. Colonel Warren, in a very loud voice, which could be heard in the village, addressed the officials and sheiks with reference to the administration of the governor, assuring them that it was not in accordance with the wishes of the English Government. By this means he attracted the attention of the townspeople, of whose support he was pretty certain, and drew them near to the fort: the market-square soon became crowded, the people

thronging the gateway of the fort, and Colonel Warren ordered Bekka Effendi to admit all the principal men. Gradually they filtered in and came among the soldiers, crowding round them until there was not room for them to use their bayonets.

We did not understand what all this meant, but it appears that Colonel Warren intended, in case his proclamation did not take effect, to call upon the people to seize the soldiers, and at the same time we would seize upon Bekka Effendi and the chief officials, and he would take possession of the fort in his own person in the name of the Khedive. But we were not driven to this. When all was considered ready, Colonel Warren produced a sheet of paper, from which he read:—That finding the governor, Mustapha Mamnoon, was endangering the peace of the country, and there could be no question but that his re-assumption of the government would lead to bloodshed, therefore, in the name of H.H. the Khedive, he (Colonel Warren) declared him temporarily suspended from his functions as governor, until the pleasure of His Highness might be made known; and at the same time he directed Bekka Effendi to continue to act as governor until instructions should be received from the Dukolîa.

At first this was received somewhat dubiously, and Bekka Effendi appeared irresolute, but Colonel Warren did not leave him time to think. Easterns can make no way against constant action. After speaking to the officials and sheiks, Colonel Warren made a speech outside the fort to the townspeople of El Arîsh. He told them that all the restrictions that had been put upon them were removed; that they might visit each other in their houses, and speak to each other in the streets; and that when they were punished or imprisoned entries would

be put in the offence-book and sent to the Dukolîa, according to law. He also released the head-sheik of the village, who, we now discovered, had been imprisoned in his own house for several months. Though somewhat doubtful at first, the people received all this with subdued joy, but as they still looked with terror upon the soldiers, Colonel Warren ordered these latter into the fort: then the general enthusiasm knew no bounds, and the air was filled with that peculiar, thrilling noise made by Arab women when they rejoice.

We next re-entered the fort and examined the books and official records, and had certified extracts made therefrom to support certain charges that Colonel Warren had made against the governor. These extracts were written out in duplicate by the *bash-cateb* and signed by Bekka Effendi; one set was ordered to be sent up direct to the Dukolîa, while we kept the other ourselves, and a *précis* of the charges brought against the governor was forwarded by telegraph to Sir Edward Malet, with a report of the morning's doings. Next day orders arrived from Cairo, authorising Bekka Effendi to continue to act as governor, and instructing him to send Mustapha Mamnoon to Cairo immediately, without permitting him to enter El Arîsh. A party of soldiers were consequently despatched to arrest the governor, and turn him back to El Kantâra.

So Colonel Warren's *coup d'état* was entirely successful. Once the people realised that Mustapha Mamnoon was deposed, there was abundance of evidence immediately forthcoming to supplement the charges we had already made against him; and when subsequently at Cairo he pleaded not guilty, we were able to produce the proof of his cruelty and injustice, so that he was turned out of his command and never reinstated as governor at El Arîsh.

We were now free to turn our attention elsewhere. With reference to the Terebîn of Jebel Hilall, it was ascertained that the incapacity or treachery of Mustapha Mamnoon had prevented any combined action between him and the Turkish governor of Gaza to compel this tribe to give up their guilty tribesmen. Some time previously a meeting of the two governors had been arranged to take place on the frontier at Kan-Yunis, in order to confer about the matter, but the governor of El Arîsh had not kept the appointment, so Yusuf Effendi, after a bootless journey, returned to Gaza without doing anything.

It is very doubtful, however, whether anything in the shape of active operations against the Terebîn were possible. Certainly, on the Egyptian side, there was not the necessary force. For many years a blood-feud had been raging between the Sowârki and Terebîn, with such dire results to the Sowârki that their tribe had diminished considerably in numbers, and were now unable alone to undertake active operations against their enemies. They were, however, eager to promote a scheme Colonel Warren had proposed for a joint expedition of Tîyahah, Lehewât, and Sowarki against the Terebîn, though even then the odds would have been heavily in favour of the Terebîn. But whenever we proposed to undertake with them a tentative expedition towards Jebel Hilall, the Sowârki sheiks would shake their old heads and talk in a wild way, as only Bedouin can, of the steep mountains and rugged precipices in the Terebîn country, of their enemies' enormous numbers, and how they gave the Sowârki such a thrashing a few years back, when five hundred of their young men were killed. On such occasions statistics are a Bedoui's strong point; he revels in numbers with perfect nonchalance; and without much

conception of the meaning of the figures he quotes, trusts them to prove his point with the fact-loving Frank.

During our stay at El Arîsh we received intelligence that the five men condemned by the Court-martial at Alexandria had been executed at Zagazig. This was in direct contravention of the arrangement we had made with the Egyptian Government, and considerably militated against our chances of making any more captures in the desert. So with the approval of the authorities at head-quarters Colonel Warren decided to return to Egypt.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEPARTURE FROM EL ARÎSH. WADI EL ARÎSH. GATIÉ. THE SAND-HILL COUNTRY. ARRIVAL AT EL KANTÂRA. RECALL TO ENGLAND. THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND THE EXPEDITION. THE CRITICAL INSANITY OF IRRESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS. RESULTS OF SEARCH-EXPEDITION. CAUSES WHICH LED TO PALMER'S MURDER. SELECTION OF PALMER FOR THE MISSION TO THE DESERT. HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND ACTION. INTERMENT OF REMAINS IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

WE left El Arîsh on March 5th under escort of Salâmi Arâdi, the young Sowârki chieftain, and Hamdam, sheik of the fort camel-men, with several Bedouin and soldiers. As we left the town the whole population—men, women, and children—turned out and followed us some way on our road; and then, ascending a hill, they stood watching us till the yellow hill could only be identified in the distance by the black cap of living creatures which surmounted it. The four old Sowârki sheiks accompanied us on horseback some miles, and treated us to some horse-play, galloping their horses at full speed round us. The gaily caparisoned little animals pranced about, entering fully into the excitement of their masters, who, wildly waving their long muskets in the air, disposed of their imaginary foes, emitting all the while sharp, barking sounds.

Our course lay southwards for some miles along Wadi El Arîsh. The *wadi* is here from one to one and a half

miles broad, is almost flat, fully cultivated, and irrigated with furrows. The bed of the gully, through which the water flows (when there is any), is about one hundred yards broad; it is thickly dotted with tamarisk bushes and desert scrub, and is eight or ten feet below the cultivated portion. The gully runs mostly on the western side of the *wadi*, and up to it the sand-hills have crept, but can go no further for the time. The cereal crops were just showing above ground, and all around and in the desert beyond the ground sparkled with a carpet of beautiful little flowers. These spring up and flourish in this country for some days in the spring time, turning the arid desert into a bright and welcoming country of delight. Amongst these flowers we saw the dandelion, poppy, chickweed, asphodel, and many others that are familiar to us at home.

After some twelve miles we turned west, ascending a range of small hills, from the summit of which the desert, as far as Jebels Hilall, Yeleg, and Magâra, lay stretched out before us. We were here able to check the position of these mountains on our map, and we then set our faces steadily westward, making for El Kantâra.

Our journey westward was through a country of interminable sand-hills, everywhere moving on slowly eastwards with the prevailing wind. The western face of these hills is very gradually inclined, and up this face the sand is blown by the wind till it falls down from the crest on the east side in a steep slope of 30° or 32°. At the foot of this slope is sometimes found grass and scrub, and sometimes date-palms, with their trunks half-buried perhaps by the advancing slope of sand. There appear to be a good many minor waters amongst these hills, and we saw a good number of sheep and goats. A few tortoises were also seen, and one was carried off, and subsequently,

after a six weeks' sojourn in a portmanteau, lived through a severe winter at home out of doors, became thoroughly domesticated, and then died.

On March 8th we arrived at Gatié, where is a considerable oasis of (it is said) seventy thousand palm-trees. We did not count them, but undoubtedly they are very numerous and cover a large area. Each tree, or group of trees, has a particular owner; and, although there are no caretakers domiciled there, the owners assemble in the date season, coming from all parts of the Egyptian desert, to claim their own. There is a fine brick-well at Gatié, twelve feet in diameter; the water stood at about twenty feet below the surface when we were there. Attached to it is a shallow reservoir, forty yards long by two wide, such as could be used for watering a large number of animals.

When Napoleon Bonaparte marched his army from Egypt into Syria, he formed depots at Belbeis, Salahîa, Gatié, and El Arîsh. In those days, Gatié boasted of a collection of mud-huts, and was a depot of great importance. Doubtless Mohammed Ali, in his campaigns, used the same places as depots; and Gatié probably owes this reservoir and well to either of these two generals. These desert depots were important places to a commander trusting for his line of communication to the land; and on his retreat from Syria in 1799 Bonaparte arranged for fresh works of defence at El Arîsh. What has become of them we do not know; but they were of no avail, for the place was taken by the Turks the same year, when, it is said, three hundred French soldiers were butchered in cold blood.

A severe *khamsín* was blowing again, and we pursued our way on camel-back, facing our animals' tails, with the hoods of our *abbas* drawn well over our heads. But even

this was of no avail to keep off the sand, and, eddying round our hoods, it filled our eyes and nostrils, and even the pores of the skin, which burnt with the heated dryness of the air; while to turn round and face the wind, was as formidable as to face a stiff south-easter in the streets of Cape Town, compared to which a *fougasse* is mildness itself. From Gatié our road followed the telegraph-line, and it was amusing to see the curious results produced by the late gales. Owing to the strong wind that had now been blowing from one direction for a considerable time, the hills had travelled onwards, and in places we saw the wires running into sand-hills, whereas in others the poles, though not exactly suspended in the air, were only kept from falling by the wires.

On approaching the Suez Canal, and about ten miles distant from it, the sand-hills ceased, and their place was taken by a flat plain covered with scrub and verdure: while in the distance, as a fringe along the horizon, showed the masts of Port Said and the ships passing along the Canal. The question naturally occurred to us—whence this quantity of sand we had been passing through? Could it be that the Canal was an effectual barrier to it; and that what had passed before the Canal was made had now travelled on and was some ten miles away from it, leaving bare a comparatively fertile tract?

This sand-hill area, except for the intervening Suez Canal and a few other minor gaps, is in shape like a dog-fish with its snout at Cairo, one gill at Suez, the other at the ancient Tanis, and its tail winding round past El Arîsh, up the coast of Palestine towards Jaffa. Throughout this area the parent rock is, to a great extent, covered by the nomadic sand; but the impression we got in travelling through this country was that of a comparatively fertile

land *recently* covered up by the sand-hills, and here and there at the base of these hills the fertility of the native soil is laid open to view, and grass and palm-trees flourish. There is also historical evidence—both in the previous fertility of the country occupied by the warlike and prosperous Philistines, now to a great extent a barren waste of shifting sand, and also in the closer connection between Syria and Egypt in ancient times compared to what now exists—that this tract of now shifting sand-hills, which separates Egypt from Syria by near two hundred miles of sand, is of comparatively modern growth.

Whence this great sea of sand? Is it a limb of the Libyan Desert, which has escaped across the delta in the *khamsín* winds, and is perpetually being added to and added to; or is it the waste of the native rock of these areas; or is it a portion of the Nile silt cast up by the Mediterranean Sea?

It seems improbable that this sand comes, to any considerable extent, from the sea, for just where the sand belt is widest the land is protected from the sea by the delta and the lagoons of Menzaleh and Sirbonis, than which no better barriers against sand could be devised; besides, the prevalent winds are westerly, and except in Palestine these could not blow the sand inland from the Mediterranean shore. Neither can we attribute it to the waste of the native rock; for, though in Philistia the calcareous sandstone by disintegrating produces a vast amount of sand, this same strata is not found elsewhere in the sand-hill area; nor is there any other rock that is known to disintegrate to a similar extent, and which could give origin to the sand in question. The shape of this tract of country seems to suggest that it has its starting-point and origin in its south-western extremity, where just

south of Cairo it almost touches the Libyan Desert, and the broad cultivated-area of the delta gives place to the narrow strip of cultivation bordering the Nile of Upper Egypt. There are also indications that the cultivated area of Egypt is not so extensive as it used to be under the vast irrigation-system of the ancient Egyptians, and it thus presents less of a barrier to the wind-blown sand of the Libyan Desert than it used to do. If, then, we have to look for the origin and the modern expansion of this sand-hill area to the Libyan Desert, we cannot avoid seeking some means whereby this inroad may be mitigated. Under the improved irrigation which our engineers have introduced into Lower Egypt, and hope likewise to apply to Upper Egypt, the efficacy of the Nile to resist the onward march of the Libyan sands may be largely increased. Elsewhere, too, much might be done. The area through which the Sweet-Water Canal to Suez passes might be made another barrier to the march of the sand—a gradually spreading oasis, not only barring the march of the sand-hills, but absolutely spreading into the sand, reducing it to a productive soil and making the desert to blossom once more as the field. Instead of levying a tax of charcoal on the Bedouin, a tax of dates might be required in its place; which would foster the growth of trees instead of destroying them wholesale, and would lead to the expansion of such oases as Gatié, El Arîsh, and many others of minor degree.

We arrived at El Kantâra at eleven o'clock at night on the 6th March, after rather a long day's march. We promptly called on the governor, who invited us into a bedroom while he retired to dress himself. Somewhat wearied by our unpleasant journey, we threw ourselves down to rest, and speculated on the frame of mind of Governor Mustapha

Josef Raad. Hamdam Chowîsh.
Selîm Mosalli. Colonel Warren, C.M.G.
Salâmi Arâdi. Lieut. Haynes. Lieut. Burton.

The Search-Expedition and some Assistants.

Mamnoon, who we had ascertained had arrived, some two hours before us, with his son, Hassan Effendi, whom we had left in prison at El Arîsh. Whilst we were discussing this uninteresting topic the curtains of the bed rolled aside, and a big, loutish-looking Turk tumbled out and introduced himself as Mustapha Mamnoon. The conversation that ensued was not relieved by any great vivacity. We talked about the *khamsín* and the vileness of the road, and soon the governor of El Kantâra returned. As the latter appeared rather put out at the meeting of his two batches of guests, and first impressions left no desire to improve our acquaintance with Mamnoon, we left the house, Colonel Warren first arranging one little detail for Hassan Effendi's benefit—an arrangement which resulted in that gentleman being placed in irons and sent back to El Arîsh, to stand his trial for the cruelties committed during his short and unlawful term of governorship.

Mr. Turner, of the Egyptian telegraph-service, kindly took us into his house and gave us a refreshing cup of tea; and we left at 3 a.m. in the Canal-boat for Cairo, where we arrived on the evening of the 9th.

For the purposes of the Palmer Search-Expedition our journey to El Arîsh effected little, except the release of the Arabist governor of El Arîsh, Said Effendi, who was still detained at Cairo pending the results of our inquiry. We had nothing to urge against him, except that he appeared to be only a little more energetic than the usual *laiser faire* style of Egyptian officials, and he was therefore liberated forthwith.

There being little prospect of any further progress in capturing the culprits who were still at large without operations on a much more formidable scale than had so far been necessary, and the Bedouin having been already

taught a salutary lesson by the measures of the Search-Expedition, we were ordered to return to England, to resume our ordinary duties.

On March 6th there had been a debate in the House of Commons, when certain members of the irreconcilable party had attacked the Government on their conduct of the matters which had resulted in Professor Palmer's death, and the subsequent Search-Expedition. Colonel Warren had not escaped the flattering attention of these gentlemen, who did not hesitate to challenge his integrity in the conduct of the investigation, and in the words of one of their number, "Colonel Warren had not scrupled, by the use of duplicity, force, or torture, to extort confessions, or pseudo-confessions, from those incriminated persons."

The eagerness with which people at home adopt and make public the gravest and most discreditable charges against their countrymen beyond the seas, where they are unable effectually to defend their own conduct, occasions some of the saddest moments in the lives of those whose duty it is to serve their country in foreign lands. We have lately had an instance of this in the charges that were brought against Captain Lugard by the French priests, and which were fulminated, scattered broad-cast, and believed in to a great extent by the public, without the subject of these infamous charges having the opportunity, until months had elapsed, of refuting them. Captain Lugard, D.S.O., has told us how Lord Salisbury's emphatic refusal to accept unproved so infamous an indictment gave him fresh heart, after the disgust which had filled him when he received intelligence of the enormities which had been falsely laid to his charge.

The attack upon the Search-Expedition and its chief was not the subject of a similar rebuff by the responsible

Minister in the House of Commons; and we had to wait till the 11th to receive justice at the hands of the Government. Then, in the House of Lords, Lord Northbrook, the First Lord of the Admiralty, gave expression to these words:—"I wish to take this opportunity of also clearing up a point with reference to a very gallant officer who has done most excellent service for the protection of the Canal; I mean Colonel Warren. Colonel Warren, as soon as it was rumoured that Professor Palmer and his party were missing, volunteered at once to go out and assist in the search. *He has pursued that search with gallantry, determination, good judgment, and a perfectly judicial mind.* He has taken the greatest care to ascertain who were the really guilty parties, and I must protest against the inference . . . . that in prosecuting the murderers—for I can find no other term for them—there has been anything whatever done of which an Englishman can be for a moment ashamed. The inquiry has been conducted with the greatest care, and I am as certain as I am that I am now addressing the House, that the men who were hanged deserved their fate."

But it was not only in a personal attack on Colonel Warren that the opponents of the Government spent their energies; they went to work on other and broader grounds, and indulged in wilder and more insane criticism. The "sending of Professor Palmer and Captain Gill, R.E., into the desert, not only to seduce the Bedouin from helping Arabi, but also to seduce them into cutting the telegraph wires of their liege lord the Sultan of Turkey, the ally of the English Government," was characterised as "such double-dyed treason and trickery as never was exceeded in the whole history of tortuous transactions." The ambush by which Professor Palmer was captured was explained as

"national resistance to the invasion and spydom, and bribery and treachery of the (Palmer's) Mission." The murder of Professor Palmer and his companions was characterised in the English Parliament as the justifiable exaction of the penalties of war upon spies, and the proceedings of the Government in demanding and carrying out justice against these murderers resulted in what was termed "the bloody judicial murder carried out with the connivance of the Government."

Englishmen are now tolerably used to the libellous embroidery with which some modern politicians adorn their attacks on their political opponents, and in the case of men whose sole trade is talk, and whose future is bound up in the virulence of the language they can fabricate and employ, one need not be surprised at a little unnecessary piquancy of expression. There are, however, some questions which are above the treatment of party-politics, and the careful moderation with which, in this case, Her Majesty's Government had pursued its task of defending the interests of the Empire and the lives of our countrymen abroad should have relieved it from being made the subject of such a hysterical series of unjustifiable misstatements.

It is perhaps idle to refer, at this late day, to such blatant rubbish, which could only find a footing in minds saturated with the belief that in rebellion a people finds its most fitting attitude, and that the overturning of constituted authority is everywhere a desirable consummation. One might go further, and attribute to the orator who gave utterance to the above-quoted criticisms the desire to foster and perpetuate the spirit and effects of fanaticism, and to officially establish that the duty of the Mohammedan to kill the Christian is one which, as good Christians, we cannot deny to the faithful Moslem: but, doubtless, it

would be paying unnecessary attention to matter which, at best, probably only represents the seizing of an occasion for hampering a Ministry and weakening the government of the country—a part which would appear in this nineteenth century to be developing into a public duty incumbent upon all citizens. However, let it be granted for one moment that, having captured Palmer, Charrington, Gill, and their two attendants, the Arabs felt justified in shooting them as spies; was it not still necessary for the victors to exact punishment notwithstanding? What would be the ordinary course in such a case? Would it not be to organise a punitive expedition, and send men to take indiscriminate vengeance on the people and authorities amongst whom the justification for shooting three Englishmen in cold blood were possible? And yet what do the Government do? Initiate an inquiry which works away amongst the Bedouin for some months, slowly unravelling the details of the crime and apprehending the guilty persons; instilling into the hearts of the Bedouin a veneration for a conquering nation whose love of justice can control its power of revenge; and finally, only proceeding to punishment after scrupulously satisfying both the law of the land and the justice-loving instincts of the English people.

The characterising of our work as culminating in a "bloody judicial murder" derives little support from the complete pacification of the desert which resulted from the Expedition, and the establishment of a confidence towards the Government which had never before been exhibited by the sons of the desert. As the Bedouin frequently informed us, they now recognised that it was a love of justice that had enabled the English to become so great a nation; and whilst Colonel Warren displayed a

constant solicitude for their general welfare, and left no stone unturned to ensure that those only who were guilty should suffer punishment, they, on their part, quietly acquiesced in our endeavours, and displayed no hostility towards us although our lives were constantly in their power. Our inquiry aroused no angry feelings amongst the tribesmen, but, with the exaction of punishment for crime, left the desert in a perfectly secure condition. Confidence in the Government was largely stimulated, and, unless the last ten years has strangely belied the promise that the desert held out to us in 1883, the safety of, and facilities for, travelling through it were considerably augmented. Colonel Kitchener, who visited the country subsequently, gives some testimony on this point in "Seir and Moab." He says:—"Colonel Sir Charles Warren's energetic action in the capture and bringing to justice of the perpetrators of the crime has created a deep impression, and I consider the whole peninsula is now, for foreign travellers, as safe as, if not safer than, it was previously."

Much as been said as to the reasons of Palmer's murder. Why were he and his companions murdered? As we have already indicated, our inquiry did not decide this; but the evidence of the Bedouin generally pointed to the disappointment of the Arabs at losing the money Palmer had brought with him, and the murder of the captives followed in a spirit of wanton vengeance, strengthened by the consideration that dead men tell no tales.

Colonel Kitchener relates that the murder took place owing to the order of Arabi to the Governor of Nackl; and he gives the following interesting Bedoui account of the matter:—"The Arab sheiks who had come with the party (Palmer's Expedition) ran away with the money. The Arabs did not know Sheik Abdullah, and did not

believe his statement, and when he offered money his own sheik would not give it; so they believed that the party were running away from Suez, and they finished them there. Afterwards the great colonel came and caught them, and they were finished off at Zag es Zig. May their graves be defiled." And he also says:—"While on this subject I may mention that I found Professor Palmer's death everywhere regretted deeply by the people, and his memory still warm in the hearts of his Arab friends in this country. Many of them came unsolicited to ask me if I had known him, and to express their sorrow at his loss."

As the only evidence on the subject since the termination of our inquiry these statements are particularly interesting, but they attribute the murder to the following three distinct causes:—

(1) The Bedouin did not believe what Palmer said, but thought that the party of Franks were escaping from Suez.

(2) When Palmer offered them money, Metter Sofia would not give it up, although he had possession of it.

(3) The murder took place owing to the order of Arabi to the Governor of Nackl.

The first cause I do not think possible, because amongst the Bedouin were men who had spied upon Palmer's movements from the start, and were perfectly well acquainted with the position of affairs at Suez. The second cause is entirely in accordance with the evidence we received. The third cause opens up the question of the instigators of the murder, a matter upon which our inquiry was unsatisfactory, owing to causes easily determined.

The government of the Bedouin, as has been explained, was vested solely in the sheiks; and, as in the instances quoted in Chapter IX., p. 197, the sheiks were held

personally responsible whenever a crime was committed of sufficient importance to warrant the interference of the Government. Thus, if in ordinary times Palmer had been murdered and the public money stolen, the sheik of the country, and perhaps Shedîd, would have been thrown into prison and kept there until the crime had been expiated by the surrender of the culprits and the restoration of the money. Such methods of government are, however, entirely opposed to Western ideals, and could not for one moment have been permitted after England's assumption of control in Egypt; and rightly so, for the system is demoralising in the extreme, tending to the destruction of any sense of individuality amongst the Bedouin by the concentration of all authority and responsibility in the hands of the head-men. We had therefore to proceed on a different system: we had to hold the individual by whom the crime had been committed responsible for his misdeeds, and the law of blood for blood had to be rigorously enforced, and penalties exacted, not from the tribes in the way of a blood-tax, but from the actual murderers. In this way, our efforts being mainly directed to the punishing of the murderers, the Bedouin, true to their sheiks, studiously withheld from us all information concerning the attitude of their leaders during the war, and only told us those incidents that tended to their credit. Thus we were constantly informed that Shedîd had sent word to the desert that any Christians captured were to be sent to Cairo unhurt. This feature of the evidence was perhaps consequent on our employment of the sheiks in the search for, and arrest of, the guilty parties; but it is probable that if we had proceeded further in our inquiry, and had succeeded in arresting the Terebîn culprits, we should then have obtained the evidence of men removed from the

influence of the Shedîds, and doubtless mutual recriminations would have followed and have led to important results.

Looking back, after the interval of time that has elapsed, at the facts of Palmer's murder, the explanation of the crime that we offered ten years ago does not now seem to me complete. The following are important facts connected with this question :—

(1) When Palmer tried to return to the desert he experienced opposition from the Towâra, who said that the desert was not safe.

(2) On being captured he and his companions were stripped and treated in a manner that would only have been meted out to them if death was to follow.

(3) There appears to have been but little disposition to ransom the captives.

These facts appear to me to point to the conclusion that the murder was but little due to the circumstances of the capture, the escape of the guide with the money, &c., but must be attributed to weightier and more deep-seated reasons.

Palmer, as doubtless was well-known in the desert, had been endeavouring with some success to secure the attachment of the Bedouin to the Khedive. During his first journey through the desert the true issues at stake were not apparent to the Bedouin, for it was not until July 27 that Arabi Pasha issued proclamations denouncing the Khedive, after which for the Arabs to side with the Khedive was to range them with unbelievers against the newly-found prophet of Islam. Covetuous as the Bedouin are, no amount of gold could neutralise their inborn fanaticism once it were aroused from its normal, dormant condition, and when the bombardment of Alex-

andria and the burning and pillaging of the city which ensued were followed by the preaching of the *Jihâd* and the denunciation of the Khedive as the traitor of his country, the flame of fanaticism burst out and swept over Egypt, reaching far and wide over the East, and converted the customary covetuousness of the Bedouin into a *quantité negligeable* by comparison.

Thus Palmer's death was, in the main, merely one of those dastardly outrages upon Christians which followed upon Arabi's revolt, and were due to his efforts to stir up the religious fanaticism of the Arabs. Doubtless the disappointment at the loss of the gold helped to bring matters to their rapid conclusion, but the chief responsibility for the murder must lie upon Arabi Pasha and those educated men around him who deliberately chose to sound the war-note of the *Jihâd*, well knowing the horrors that were bound to ensue.

In their evidence the Bedouin, as might be expected, never referred to the effect of their fanatical frenzy, and never took up the line of the religious martyr to openly glory in the destruction of the unbelievers; and as they constantly referred to their disappointment at losing the money taken by Metter Sofia, in assigning reasons for the murder we dwelt chiefly upon the cause concerning which we had direct evidence.

The circumstances which surrounded Palmer's untimely death seem to suggest some error of judgment in his selection for the work to be done in the desert. It is useless now to seek to apportion any blame in this matter, and Captain Gill, who was mainly instrumental in bringing Palmer upon the platform in connection with the war, paid the penalty for error of judgment, if error of judgment there were, with his life. Mr. Walter Besant refers

to this matter in his Memoir on Palmer. He says:— "Yet Palmer ought not to have been allowed to go. On this point there seems no doubt or dispute whatever. So long as there was a single soldier in Her Majesty's dominion who could be entrusted with the work this scholar should have been spared." The loss to Oriental scholarship in his death was incalculable, and it is doubtful whether, even with his personal knowledge of the country, he was quite fitted for the mission he undertook, and did not to a great extent compass his own death. His very trustfulness in human nature, and in his own personal ascendancy over the Arabs, seem to have warped his judgment for times like these, when the bitterest and most deep-seated animosities were rife; and his exceptional intellectual activity and sanguine nature seem to have carried him further, in judging of the instructions of his superiors and the intentions of the Bedouin, than their respective words and actions implied.

We have Lord Northbrook's absolutely definite statement that he sent Palmer out to *obtain information* about the Bedouin; and Palmer knew this was so at first, for we find in a letter of his, written at Jaffa, between the 5th and 11th July, "There is going to be an English occupation of Egypt. That seems pretty clear, and this journey I make *to see how the Arabs are*, but afterwards I shall have all the troops and war-ships at hand to back me up, and be in constant communication with head-quarters. . . ." What was in his mind when he penned the latter part of this sentence has not been made clear; but in his diary of the 19th he says: "I have got hold of some of the very men whom Arabi Pasha has been trying to get over to his side, and when they are wanted I can have every Bedoui at my call from Suez to Gaza." And again on the 20th

he says: "In fact, I have already done the most difficult part of my task, and as soon as I get precise instructions the thing is done, and a thing which Arabi Pasha failed to do, and on which the safety of the road to India depends." And again on the 21st: "I am anxious to get to Suez, because I have done all I wanted by way of preliminaries, and as soon as I get precise instructions I can settle with the Arabs in a fortnight or three weeks, and get the whole thing over. As it is, the Bedouin keep quite quiet, and will not join Arabi, but will wait for me to give them the word what to do." And on the 22nd he says: "I am very glad that the war has actually come to a crisis, because now I shall really have to do my big task, and I am certain of success."

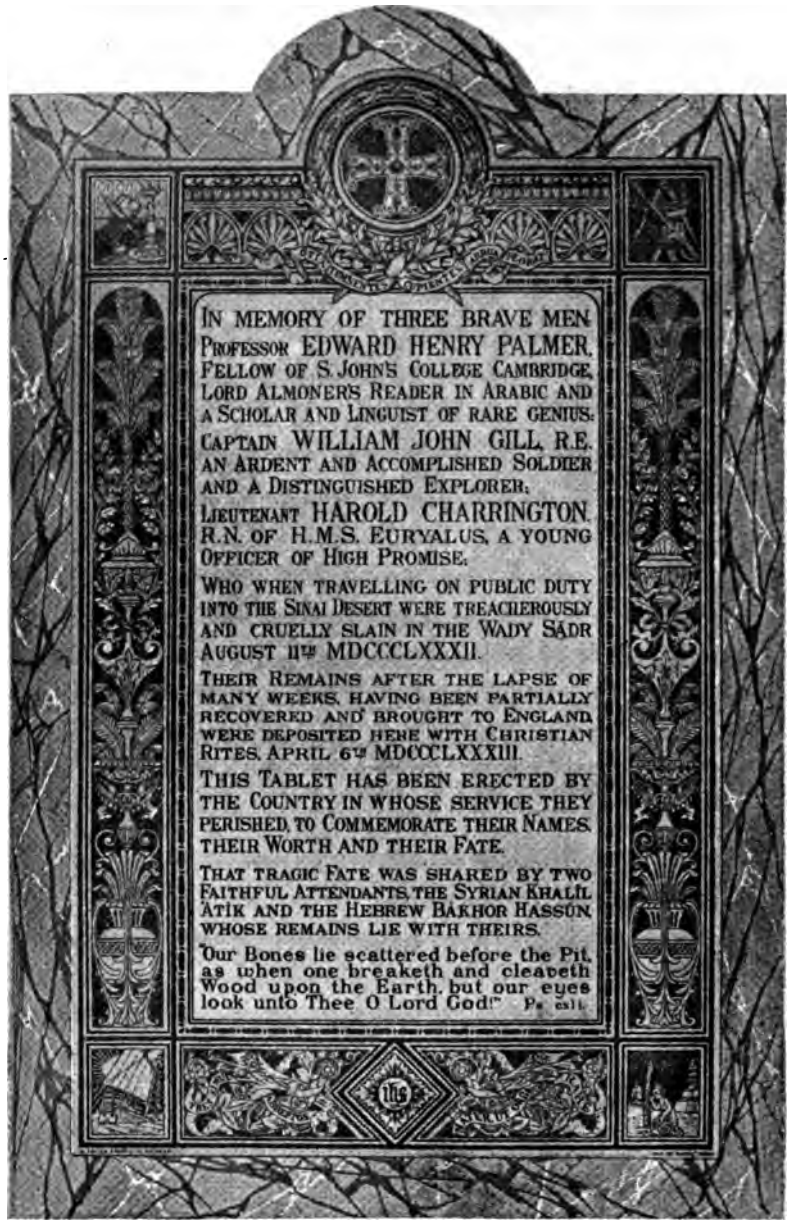
The conflict between Lord Northbrook's instructions and the view Professor Palmer took of his duty is clearly defined, and has led to the impression that the Government withheld some important information from the public when it was given out that Palmer had been sent into the desert to *obtain information*. There appears, however, little ground for this reproach against the Government. When Palmer left England for the desert, a fortnight before the bombardment of Alexandria, it is difficult to imagine how he could be instructed to do anything else except ascertain whether or not the Bedouin were loyal to the Khedive. If he found them loyal, and civil-war broke out, of course the next step would have been to use the Bedouin against the rebels. This was apparently his view of matters when at Jaffa he penned the letter, of which an extract is given above. During his visit to the Mediterranean Fleet we may well imagine that Palmer imbibed to some extent the war-fever that is always more or less dominant amongst sailors and soldiers when there is a chance of war;

and after the bombardment of Alexandria occurred we find him definitely striving to secure the one end which was the natural sequel to his mission, viz., the raising of the Bedouin against the rebels. In so doing it is impossible to blame Professor Palmer. He did what any Englishman worth his salt would have done under the circumstances; recognising his unique position for striking a blow for Old England, he struck with might and main, and with remarkable effect.

One cannot but admire the calm, trusting intrepidity of the scholar who, to serve his country, placed himself in situations of the greatest peril. Who, seeing an opportunity of helping England's fighting-men, did not scruple to abandon the *rôle* of simple traveller, and take up that of an accredited agent of the anti-popular party, well knowing that by so doing he increased ten-fold the risk he was running by being in the desert at all at such a time. And finally, when he re-entered the desert with only a limited sum for buying camels, without any immediate prospect of employment for the Bedouin whom he had urged to remain on the side of the Khedive, he went as unprotected as before, when he was uncompromised, and could make use of the inherent cupidity of the Arabs in order to attain his ends.

On March 16th we transferred the remains of Professor Palmer and his companions to one of H.M. ships at Alexandria to be conveyed to England; and on April 6th they were carried to their last resting-place beneath the dome of England's great cathedral. There, hard by the remains of our national heroes, Nelson, Wellington, and the rest, may be seen the memorial to our gallant countrymen, Palmer, Gill, and Charrington, who died in the service of their country eight months previous to interment. The

funeral was an impressive spectacle, and, taking part in the ceremony with the numerous assembly of England's living, who had come to honour England's dead, one's thoughts went back to that other memorial, that cairn of stones holding aloft the cross in the "Desert of the Wanderings," and the terrible scene that had been enacted there; and as the choir chanted the pilgrims' hymn, "My God, my Father, while I stray," one could not but ponder over the oft-recurring words "Thy will be done."


IN MEMORY OF THREE BRAVE MEN
PROFESSOR EDWARD HENRY PALMER,
FELLOW OF S. JOHN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE,
LORD ALMONER'S READER IN ARABIC AND
A SCHOLAR AND LINGUIST OF RARE GENIUS;
CAPTAIN WILLIAM JOHN GILL, R.E.
AN ARDENT AND ACCOMPLISHED SOLDIER
AND A DISTINGUISHED EXPLORER;
LIEUTENANT HAROLD CHARRINGTON,
R.N. OF H.M.S. EURYALUS, A YOUNG
OFFICER OF HIGH PROMISE;
WHO WHEN TRAVELLING ON PUBLIC DUTY
INTO THE SINAI DESERT WERE TREACHEROUSLY
AND CRUELLY SLAIN IN THE WADY SÁDR
AUGUST 11TH MDCCCLXXXII.
THEIR REMAINS AFTER THE LAPSE OF
MANY WEEKS, HAVING BEEN PARTIALLY
RECOVERED AND BROUGHT TO ENGLAND,
WERE DEPOSITED HERE WITH CHRISTIAN
RITES, APRIL 6TH MDCCCLXXXIII.
THIS TABLET HAS BEEN ERECTED BY
THE COUNTRY IN WHOSE SERVICE THEY
PERISHED, TO COMMEMORATE THEIR NAMES,
THEIR WORTH AND THEIR FATE.
THAT TRAGIC FATE WAS SHARED BY TWO
FAITHFUL ATTENDANTS, THE SYRIAN KHALÍL
ÁTÍK AND THE HEBREW BAKHOR HASSÚN,
WHOSE REMAINS LIE WITH THEIRS.
"Our Bones lie scattered before the Pit,
as when one breaketh and cleaveth
Wood upon the Earth. but our eyes
look unto Thee O Lord God!" Ps. cxli.

MEMORIAL IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

APPENDIX A.

NOTES BY SIR CHARLES WARREN ON HIS CONNECTION WITH THE PALMER SEARCH-EXPEDITION, &c.

On July 24th, 1882, when employed at Chatham as Instructor in Surveying, in consequence of a General Order on the subject permitting it, I volunteered for active service in the approaching Egyptian Campaign, and forwarded a memorandum relative to arranging for large working-parties and establishing discipline among Bedouin and Arabs, pointing out that I had passed ten summers in the Mediterranean and had extensive experience in such matters.

I was then directed to draw up a detailed report on the subject, and accordingly considered the question of dealing with the Bedouin for the safety of the Suez Canal, which at that time was the absorbing centre of interest to all. At this time I was not aware that Professor Palmer was actually in the desert preparing to report on subjects akin to this. All that transpired in the public journals about his journey at the time was that he had started off to the western coast of the Red Sea; no reference was made to his employment on the Suez Canal, and the general impression was that he was out on the staff of a newspaper.

I was engaged some days on my report, and by a somewhat singular coincidence I completed and signed it at midnight on August 10th, just about the time when the party was waylaid and taken prisoners. I mention it as a coincidence because in this report I entered into the question of a successful entry among the tribes of the desert to the following effect:—"It will be necessary to make a secure entry among them. It will be

seen that there are Turkish garrisons in Gaza and Kerak, and it is known that at the present time these Turks are intensely jealous of the movements of English persons in Syria; it therefore would appear to be now too late to enter through Palestine and pass down by Hebron into the desert with any chance of success. Again, there is probably an Egyptian governor at El Arîsh, and Egyptians are on the coast along the caravan-route; it is, therefore, doubtful whether a successful entry could be made between Gaza and Port Said. On the Suez Canal itself foreign jealousy would probably retard a successful entry. The best course, I think, would be to pass down the Suez Canal and effect a landing about forty miles south of Suez, on the east coast of the Red Sea. I would send a trusty messenger from Suez to the Sheik of the Tiyahah Bedouin, requesting him to meet me there and to bring other sheiks. Care would have to be taken to avoid Nackl, where there is an Egyptian garrison." I then, after describing the Egyptian and Turkish system of government of the Bedouin, proceeded to point out the dangers and difficulties to which the mission I proposed would be subjected. "It would not, I think, be desirable to introduce British troops among the Bedouin. I would propose trusting entirely to the Bedouin, and forming my escort from them. The principal risks to be run, otherwise than those incidental to engaging the enemy, would be:

a. Murder while sleeping,
b. Poisoning,

by emissaries of Arabi or the Egyptians.

Poisoning may be guarded against in a variety of ways, but murder during sleep can only effectually be guarded against by having sufficient Europeans for *one* always to be awake on watch. The person employed to murder in sleep would probably be some camp-attendant, and I would avoid this difficulty by having no camp-followers, and living among and eating among the Bedouin; but I would propose to have three assistants and a clerk. In a mission of this nature it is essential that these assistants should be men I should know sufficiently to be able to rely upon . . . ."

On August 12th I received an intimation that Professor Palmer was engaged on government service, and had occupied the ground I had reported on with his base at Gaza, and that there was no present prospect of my services being required. All prospects of proceeding on this service ceased until August 24th, when I received a telegram from the Admiralty indicating that I might be required immediately to proceed to the seat of war, and stating that my services had been asked for from the War Office, in order that I might join the Admiral in the Canal. I waited on Lord Northbrook that afternoon, and learnt from him the position of affairs regarding Professor Palmer's party so far as was known—that they had entered the desert again, and that there were rumours that they had been robbed and were thus prevented carrying out their instructions—and I was directed to proceed at once to the Suez Canal to report myself for duty to the Admiral Commanding-in-Chief.

My mission in general was to proceed among the Bedouin for any duty that might be required. On account of the particular nature of these services I was permitted to recommend the names of two officers to accompany me, and I submitted those of Lieutenant E. M. Burton, R.E., and Lieutenant A. E. Haynes, R.E., and also that of Quarter-Master-Sergeant E. Kennedy, R.E., as clerk and store-keeper, the latter having accompanied me to South Africa in a former expedition. Owing to the active measures taken by Sir Andrew Clarke, Commandant S.M.E., I was enabled to conclude all arrangements that night, and left London on the following day at 7.30 p.m. for the Suez Canal, with Lieutenant Haynes and Quarter-Master-Sergeant Kennedy; Sir John Stokes, the Deputy-Adjutant-General, having arranged that Lieutenant Burton, who was in Ireland, should follow by the next overland mail.

Although no linguist, and having but a limited knowledge of the Arabic language, I had an intimate acquaintance with Arabs, and had lived a good deal among half-civilised tribes. Having been quartered for seven years at Gibraltar I had had ample opportunity of observing the Moors of North Africa; and

subsequently during three and a half years in Syria I became well acquainted with the Arabs, and particularly the Bedouin; at one time I was travelling with the latter when they were fighting with Turkish troops. Consequently, when making my report on the desert, I was speaking on a subject completely familiar to me.

It will be observed that my views differed somewhat from those of Professor Palmer on several points. First, as to the desirability of entering the desert from Gaza. I represented the undesirability of endeavouring to enter the desert from the direction of Syria, owing to the ill-will that the Turkish officials bore towards us at that time, and the jealousy with which they watched all movements of Englishmen. The correctness of this view, though a mere matter of opinion, was accentuated by the fact that Professor Palmer afterwards stated that he made his entry there only at the imminent risk of his life. Secondly, I differed as to the number of Bedouin available in Arabia Petræa. Palmer and Gill estimated the number at fifty thousand, but I can find no reason to alter my estimate made on August 10, 1882, that there were but five thousand available, while five thousand would be required among the tribes for local protection, making in all but ten thousand. Thirdly, I differed as to the fort of Nackl; the fort was made by Palmer the rendezvous of the assembled sheiks, whereas I laid stress upon the point that this fort should be particularly avoided, being the residence of an Egyptian or Turkish governor devoted to Arabi Pasha.

With regard to the relative influence and importance of the various desert tribes, the views of Palmer and Gill, as judged by after events, required very great modification; and I think it probable that the fact of a war between Moslems and Christians being at hand was not sufficiently taken into account. For example, it was asserted that the Towâra of the Sinaitic Peninsula were a powerful tribe, but as a matter of fact this was only so in peace time, as in war they count as nothing. It was supposed that the Tîyahah and Towâra were the most powerful tribes on the Canal, whereas the Terebîn and Haiwatât are the principal tribes; and moreover, owing to a similarity of names, the Lehewât and Haiwatât were confused together.

It may truly be said that for war purposes scarcely anything was known of the Bedoui tribes about the Canal. Whether it was practicable before the war to obtain this knowledge I cannot say, because my more exact information was arrived at under most peculiar circumstances—when travelling with a miscellaneous number of men, out of every important tribe in the district, to whom we could instantly refer, and pit one against the other as to the truth of their statements. What I particularly wish to lay stress upon is the fact that the relative importance of the tribes in the desert was quite unknown when Palmer travelled through them, and there was complete ignorance of the places they located. It is to be recollected that tribes move on like the billows of sand in the desert; that it was twelve years since Palmer had travelled through on a previous occasion, and consequently most important changes had taken place. In fact, the first point that struck me on arrival on the Canal was the reiterated caution I received from old Syrian friends: "Everything has changed in the desert since you were in Syria." A keen observer will notice most marked changes in the sea-shore after every tide has left the coast; and so it is with the tribes of the desert, every season leaves its distinct traces and brings about a change. If Palmer had had sufficient time he could have made an admirable report upon the desert tribes, but he had to plunge into the desert at a time when everything was in process of change from peace to war (for the bombardment of Alexandria took place while he was in the desert), and the fact that there were portions of the two tribes he most dreaded, the Terebîn and Haiwatât, in the very *wadi* he passed through to his death was not only unknown to himself, but to the people who had dwelt at Suez for years past.

I must make another observation. Many years ago, when visiting Eastern magnates, I noticed that those Europeans who seemed to get on best with the Turks and Arabs always employed interpreters, even when they knew the language intimately. They had many reasons for this custom, some of etiquette, others of expediency; but the most cogent reason was, that however well you may speak the language of another person, you are

always at a *disadvantage,* being never quite perfect in it; while with an interpreter you have a distinct *advantage,* as you hear the reply in two languages, and get your own idea of it and that of the interpreter. Experience has taught me that a man who knows a little of a language and employs an interpreter, is better placed than one who knows a language pretty well and uses no interpreter. In fact, I put very little faith in the results of interviews where a good interpreter is not employed. In all my own dealings with Easterns I employed an interpreter as a matter of course.

APPENDIX B.

ABBREVIATED ACCOUNT OF PROFESSOR PALMER'S MISSION, BY SIR CHARLES WARREN.

Professor Palmer arrived at Jaffa on July 9th, proceeded along the coast to Gaza, and left Gazâ for Suez about July 14th in company with Hamdan and five other Tîyahah. Passing near Minieh, he met Sheik Misleh of the Tîyahah and Metter Sofîa at Bowéteh. Metter was introduced to him as the head-sheik of the Lehewât, occupying all the country south-east of Suez. He kept up this deception all through his journey with Professor Palmer, and it was principally owing to the difficulties arising from this mistake that Professor Palmer fell into the hands of the Bedouin who subsequently murdered him and his party. Metter Sofîa was not a sheik of the Lehewât, and the Lehewât as a tribe do not live to the south-east of Suez. The sheik of the Lehewât is Aleyan, and the tribe live between the Azâzimeh and Tîyahah, to the south of Hebron. Metter Sofîa was simply the head of a family, who had left their tribe and gone to live near Suez: he had collected there two or three families acting as his partisans, and which he chose to call the Sofîa tribe, but he was without any power or influence whatever, and, in fact, having broken with his tribe, was a most undesirable person to act as escort to travellers.

Professor Palmer sent Metter Sofîa with a letter to Suez, and proceeded with Misleh to Jebel Magâra, where he stayed until the return of Metter on July 26th. He then took leave of Misleh and proceeded to Suez with Metter Sofîa and his cook Bochor, arriving there on August 1st. Here he remained for

some days. He was joined by Captain Gill from England on August 6th. In the meantime, Metter Sofîa had gone to his tents at Tussêt Sadr, and on August 6th he received a letter from Professor Palmer telling him to bring down twenty armed men to escort him to Nackl. He was unable to read this letter, and came at once into Ayun Mûsa, where he arrived on the evening of August 7th with his nephew, Salâmi Ibn Aîd. He came into Suez on the evening of August 7th and was presented to the admiral, and received from him a naval officer's sword. That night he stopped at M. Zahr's house, and left the sword with him; and it has been suggested by some that this act was an indication of his subsequent conduct.

On August 8th, Professor Palmer, after all his expenses in Suez had been defrayed by the Admiralty, received in a bag £3000 to take into the desert, each thousand in a separate small bag. In the afternoon, the party, consisting of Professor Palmer, Captain Gill, the dragoman, Khalîl Atek, Lieutenant Charrington, and Bochor, the cook, proceeded to Ayun Mûsa by sea. They slept at Ayun Mûsa, and started thence for Nackl, *viâ* Wadi Sadr, on the morning of August 9th. Their party consisted of Metter Sofîa and his nephew, Salâmi Ibn Aîd, Sualem N'Mair, a Lehewât from Suez, seven Aligât, and one M'Saineh, cameleers. The camels were:—two belonging to Metter Sofîa and his nephew, ten of Professor Palmer's, and four hired from the Aligât.

The party lunched at Wadi Lahasa, and while they were there two Haiwatât came up to them on camels, Ibn Sûbheh and Muslem Abu Nar. These two had considerable conversation with Metter Sofîa, and Muslem received two pounds from Metter and proceeded towards Marbook; while Ibn Sûbheh accompanied the party to Wadi Kahalîn, where they encamped for the night.

About sunset, arrived from Ayun Mûsa, Musleh Ooûdah, a Haiwatât, Salim Sulman, an Aligât, and Saad M'said, a Genoûneh. During the evening Ibn Sûbheh was seen to have frequent private conversation with Salim Sulman, and it is surmised that Ibn Sûbheh persuaded him to steal two of Professor Palmer's

camels during the night, to delay the party several hours, and give the attacking party time to come down to attack them. That same evening Ali Shwair, a Terebîn, living at Ayun Mûsa, arrived at Ain Abu Jerad, a spring at the mouth of Wadi Sadr, an hour and a half's journey beyond Wadi Kahalîn, having been sent, according to his own statement, by Ibn Sûbheh for the purpose of bringing down the Terebîn and Dubûr of Wadi Sadr to attack Professor Palmer's party, and here, he and Salem Sheyk, a Haiwatât, slept that night.

On the morning of August 10th, it was found that the three Bedouin had left Professor Palmer's camp during the night, and that two of his camels had also disappeared. It was at once concluded that the men had stolen the camels, and Salâmi Ibn Aîd, M'duckle, and two others, were at once sent in search. They pursued them for about eighteen miles, crossing Wadi Sadr to a water beyond Halifeh, and then rescued them from Salim Sulman, who was driving them off. They returned to Wadi Kahalîn with the stolen camels about 3 p.m., and reported to Professor Palmer the facts of the case. Anxiety was at once felt owing to this very unusual occurrence, and, on being strongly urged by Metter Sofîa to do so, it was determined to allow the baggage to come on quietly with the tired animals, while the party proceeded direct to Metter Sofîa's camp at Tusset Sadr, carrying the money with them. It is difficult to understand Metter Sofîa's precise object in this arrangement, for had he really hurried the party on they might easily have been out of Wadi Sadr before the attacking party came down; as it was they seem to have proceeded at a very leisurely pace. The baggage left about an hour after the party, and unloaded near Ain Abu Jerad shortly after sunset.

Professor Palmer's party, consisting of himself, Captain Gill, Lieutenant Charrington, Kalîl Atek, Metter Sofîa, and Salâmi Ibn Aîd, proceeded up the *wadi*, and, passing Ibn Sûbheh and Salem Sheyk asleep on the road, arrived at a place called Muhareb after midnight. Here they were met by a party of Dubûr and Terebîn, who had come down a few minutes before from their camp at the *mazeira* (corn ground) at Rahah. They

had been informed of the coming of the party in the evening by Ali Shwair, who had started from Ain Abu Jerad after an interview with Ibn Sûbheh, who joined him there from the camp at Wadi Kahalîn.

When an attack appeared imminent the camels of Professor Palmer's party knelt down, and, apparently, at this time the camel of Salâmi Ibn Aîd, on which Captain Gill was riding, was shot in the head and incapacitated. Professor Palmer was riding the camel of Metter Sofîa with Salâmi Ibn Aîd, and in its *huradje* was his despatch-box and the bag containing three thousand pounds. There was a report that immediately on the attack Salâmi Ibn Aîd threw Professor Palmer off the camel and decamped with the money. Salâmi himself stated that Professor Palmer ordered him to ride off with it. He got safely down the *wadi*, and in the early morning passed within a few feet of the cameleers, who were sleeping with the baggage, but he did not speak to them, though had he done so the life of Bochor, the cook, might have been saved. He gave no warning at Ayun Mûsa, but made a great circuit round by Wadi el Hadj, and secreting the money in the ground came to his uncle's camp at Tusset Sadr on the evening of the 12th.

To return to Professor Palmer's party. Metter Sofîa was riding a camel carrying some boxes and a tent, which Captain Gill was going to take into the desert, and he managed to elude the attacking party and rode up the *wadi* to his camp at Drieseh, beyond Tusset Sadr. The party was thus reduced to three Englishmen and one Syrian. Outnumbered and overpowered, they were forced to submit; their clothes were torn from them; they were stripped naked all but their underclothes, and were put down for safe keeping in a sheltered nook in the rocks, close to the place of attack. It does not appear, at this time, that there was any idea of murdering them; on the contrary, it seems that the Bedouin said they would send the party into Suez as soon as they had got their money. After leaving the four in safe-keeping, the Dubûr and Terebîn proceeded quickly down the *wadi* in search of Salâmi Ibn Aîd and the baggage. Meeting the latter coming up the *wadi* they asked where the

money was, and ransacked the baggage in search of it; they were greatly incensed at not finding it, and carried off all they could find, but returned to the Aligât cameleers the camels that belonged to them, and also four camels of Professor Palmer's, which were sworn to as their own by three of the Aligât cameleers. On account of this the three Aligât were subsequently charged with the theft of them.

With two exceptions, the whole attacking party proceeded back up the *wadi*, and arrived about eleven or twelve o'clock at the place where they had left the captives; when they arrived there they found Metter Sofîa, with about ten men, engaged in conversation with the captives. It appears that Metter Sofîa, after reaching his camp, had collected all the men he could find to come down with him to assist the captives; and from the evidence of Metter Sofîa it would appear that though some of them were willing to protect the party to their utmost, he preferred to negotiate, and offered to give thirty camels as ransom, but no money. It would appear that Professor Palmer offered all the money he had brought with him that their lives should be spared. The Bedouin looked upon this offering of thirty camels by Metter Sofîa as merely a farce, because he might get them back again in accordance with tribal law; and the murderers asserted that had he offered them money they would have spared the lives of the prisoners. However this may be, it appears that Metter Sofîa did not offer to produce the money brought into the desert by Professor Palmer, and the Bedouin, in a spirit of retaliation, determined to kill all the prisoners, even the cook, who, though a Jew, was supposed by the Bedouin to be a real Moslem. When the negotiations failed Metter Sofîa and his party turned towards Tusset Sadr.

Professor Palmer, Captain Gill, Lieutenant Charrington, Khalîl Atek, and Bochor were driven by the Dubûr and Terebîn by a rough path down to Wadi Sadr. The chief men of the attacking party who decided on the murder were Salim Ibn Sûbheh and Salem Sheyk, of the Haiwatât; Salamî Abu Telhaideh, of the Dubur; Hassan Ibn Mershed and Zaid el

Ourdi, of the Terebîn. It was arranged on the way down that two should be killed by the Dubûr, and three by the Terebîn, because the latter were more numerous. On arrival at the *wadi*, Professor Palmer and his companions were driven to the edge of a steep ravine overhanging the water, and the men told off to murder them were placed behind them. They appear to have been :—for the Dubûr, Salâmi Abu Telhaideh and Salim Abu M'Haisin, but the latter paid Merceh el Rashdeh, a lad, to do the work for him ; for the Terebîn, Zaid el Ourdy, Harash, and Ali Shwair. In driving the party towards the cliff for execution, it appears that the gun of one of the men was fired prematurely, and Professor Palmer was killed. It was said by the Bedouin that it was the gun of Salem Abu Telhaideh, but he denied it, and said it was that of Merceh el Rashdeh, who, on the other hand, said it was the gun of Salem Abu Telhaideh. On Professor Palmer being shot it appears there was a general rush, the captives either threw themselves or were pushed over the cliffs, and were shot at and killed not only by those who were told off to do the work, but also by others. Khalil Atek ran for some distance, and was pursued and slain by Salâmi Abu Telhaideh and Salem Sheyk. Among others who went down to despatch the party at the bottom of the cliff were Ali Shwair, Zaid el Ourdy, Ahzam, Salâmi Abu Telhaideh, and Salem Sheyk.

APPENDIX C.

EXTRACTS FROM SOME NOTES ON ARABIA PETRÆA AND THE COUNTRY LYING BETWEEN EGYPT AND PALESTINE, BY SIR CHARLES WARREN.*

1. Between the cultivated lands of the Egyptian delta and the hill country of Palestine extends an arid wilderness, part of which is known as Arabia Petræa ; it is also known under the name of the Desert of the Exodus.

2. It is bounded on the north by the Mediteranean Sea, on the south-west by the Gulf of Suez, and on the south-east by the Gulf of Akabah and Wadi Arabah. It is thinly inhabited by nomadic tribes of Arabs, who, according to their traditions, have come from the south, from Mecca, and who are slowly migrating onward into Africa.

3. The country may roughly be divided, for general descriptions, into four portions :

a. The semi-fertile portions about the southern end of Palestine, which have once been cultivated but are now lying waste.

b. The arid table-lands of the Tîh.

c. The sandy dunes about the coast of the Mediterranean and Suez Canal.

d. The mountainous district of the Peninsula of Sinai.

a. This is commonly called the South Country, and of it Professor Palmer remarks (page 297, "The Desert of the Exodus") : "Half the desert owes its existence to him (the

* These notes were originally printed in the Professional Papers of the Royal Engineers.

Bedoui), and many a fertile plain, from which he has driven its useful and industrious inhabitants, becomes, in his hands, like the South Country, a parched and barren wilderness." This South Country, or Negeb, is wholly in Turkish territory; it is the home of the Lehewât, the Amarin, the Azâzimeh, the Jehalin, and part of the Tîyahah. It was once a well-cultivated land, and the ruins of the vineyards and terraces on the slope of the hills are still visible. This country is an artificial desert; it was not visited, and will not be further referred to.

b. The desert of the Tîh is a limestone plateau, and is described in general terms in the "Desert of the Exodus."

c. The sand district about the sea-coast and Suez does not appear to be anywhere described in detail. It is for the most part an undulating waste, covered with blown sand from the sea-shore or from the disintegration of sandstone rocks. Its sands are constantly, but slowly, in motion. In some portions the natural features of the country are very thickly covered with these sands, and only crop out at intervals.

d. The Peninsula of Sinai is described in a variety of works, including "Ordnance Survey of Sinai" and Professor Palmer's "Desert of the Exodus."

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5. The desert territorially may be divided into three portions:

A. Turkish territory.
B. Egyptian territory east of the Suez Canal.
C. Egyptian territory west of the Suez Canal.

6. The portion visited lies almost wholly between the Suez Canal and the eastern Egyptian boundary. This boundary does not appear to have been clearly defined by treaty or otherwise. Several charts show it as a straight line drawn from El Arîsh (on the Mediterranean) to Akabah; but, on the one hand, the Porte appears to assume a nominal control over some tribes of Bedouin to the west of this line (in Jebel Hilall, for example), while, on the other hand, the Egyptian territory on the coast of

the Mediterranean extends up to Rafia, midway between El Arîsh and Gaza. It seems probable that the boundary inland has never yet been demarked, and this uncertainty may at some future period be a source of difficulty, leading to a conflict of jurisdiction.

7. The tribes are located according to the lettering:

Terebîn, A.B.C.	Ayeîdeh, B.C.
Haiwatât, A.B.C.	Towâra, B.
Tîyahah, A.B.	Sowârki, A.B.
Azâzimeh, A.	M'said, B.C.
Alawîn, A.	Tûmeilat, C.
Lehewât, A.B.	Màâseh, C.
Bîli ben Ali, B.C.	

8. The *Terebîn* comprise a very powerful series of tribes principally living about Gaza, where they are said to number two thousand fighting-men.

Other detached minor tribes live near the Suez Canal, and a powerful tribe lives in the Gizeh district, near Cairo; these tribes are closely connected, but the Egyptian Terebîn have, in many instances, almost become Fellahîn. Those who live in Syria are extremely turbulent and fanatical, and are always hostile to Franks. They are said to be very untrustworthy and deceitful. They have a large number of horses and camels, grow corn, and are very wealthy. The Turkish troops quarter themselves among them during harvest-time for the purpose of collecting taxes, but are frequently driven out. The Turks generally keep some of their sheiks in prison as hostages.

The *Haiwatât* comprise also a very powerful series of tribes. Under the name of Alawîn they inhabit a large tract of country, east of the Gulf of Akabah and Wadi Arabah. They are found in the country between Suez and Akabah, but only in detachments. They occupy the country between Suez and Cairo in great force, and also about Zagazig. During the late war they were ordered to furnish a contingent of two thousand men to save Cairo from an attack from the direction of Suez. Sheik Ibn Shedîd belongs to a Haiwatât family living close to Cairo,

who, from their wealth and influence, having obtained the ear of the Egyptian Government, assume a kind of control over all the other Egyptian Bedouin. In the neighbourhood of Wadi Sadr there is a minor division of the Haiwatât tribe called *Dubûr*.

The *Azâzimeh* live wholly in Turkish territory, to the west of Wadi Arabah. They are a turbulent tribe, constantly at war with their neighbours. They have been seldom visited by travellers.

The *Alawîn* are a branch of the Haiwatât, and live in Wadi Arabah.

The *Lehewât* live near the Azâzimeh; they do not appear to be a formidable tribe. Metter Sofîa, the guide to Professor Palmer's party, belonged to this tribe, but had ceased to live among them.

The *Bîli ben Ali* live almost wholly west of the Suez Canal, but there are a few families about El Arîsh.

The *Ayeîdeh* live almost wholly west of the Suez Canal, where they have been driven during the last few years by the Terebîn, with whom they still have a blood-feud; their lands formerly extended between Jebel Magâra and Ismailia.

The *Towâra* inhabit the desert of Sinai, and keep themselves aloof from other Bedouin; they are very poor, owing to the drying up of the peninsula in recent years, caused by cutting down the timber; they are divided into several minor tribes not necessary to mention, as the whole of the fighting-men would not number more than six hundred.

The *Sowârki* are said to be a powerful tribe; they live about El Arîsh, and have horses. To all appearances they are a poor tribe. They carried on a successful war for many years with the Terebîn, with whom they have a blood-feud.

The *M'said* are a poor tribe inhabiting the Suez Canal on both sides, near El Kantâra; they are a branch of the Lehewât.

The *Tûmeilat* live on the west of the Canal, about the Wadi Tûmeilat. Their sheik, Ibrahim, is a man of some weight among the Bedouin, though his tribe is not of much account.

The *Màâsi* live in the mountains west of Suez; they are well-known marauders, and often travel several hundred miles

in their looting-expeditions. They are the finest of the Egyptian Bedouin, and would make magnificent soldiers if brought into tolerable discipline.

The *Tîyahah* are a powerful tribe inhabiting the Desert of the Tîh and South Country; they are a very warlike tribe, and are, in many cases, well disposed towards Franks; they have been in the habit of conducting tourists through their country from Nackl to Gaza.

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THE PENINSULA OF SINAI.

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14. The peninsula is principally inhabited by Towâra, but there are also a few families of Terebîn, Haiwatât, Dubûr, and Genoûnheh. They are all very poor. The Towâra are industrious, and are so poor that they have to eke out their living by driving camels for hire, and go into Egypt to act as servants in gardens. They have much work in connection with the Convent of Sinai, and see so much of tourists in the peninsula that they have less active prejudices against Franks than other Bedouin, and consequently are looked upon with doubt and suspicion by their neighbours.

In time of war they are not in the least likely to side with Christians, unless they are sure they are likely to be their future masters. The remark of the Bedoui is a very natural one; it is, "If I do anything for you openly, what is to become of me when I lose your protection?" The Towâra are not a warlike race, but they would defend their own mountain passes against great odds, or they might fight in the open in a fit of enthusiasm.

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15. Mûsa Nusîer is the hereditary chief of a tribe, and is also sheik of all the sheiks of the Towâra, but he is not the sheik of all the Towâra. There is none! He has very little active power among the Bedouin, but he is a singularly upright and honest man, and exercises a strong moral influence upon the people by his good example and straightforwardness. It is often stated in books that Mûsa Nusîer is

the chief sheik in the desert; this is a very grave error. He has no power whatever among the Terebîn, Haiwatât, Tîyahah, &c., though his opinion as a councillor in the assembly of sheiks would be very highly esteemed. Personal influence goes a great way among these people, but intrigue counteracts it. In such a case as the recent war, when sentiment ruled the Bedouin, the common-sense arguments of Mûsa Nusîer would be voted as ridiculous and out of place.

He is said during the war to have exercised some considerable control over the Towâra, and to have prevented their breaking out and sacking Tor. It is probable that his arguments among his own particular tribe may have acted as a wholesome check, but there is little doubt that Tor would have been sacked by the Towâra had not preparations been made for the defence at the proper time. Many of the Towâra took more heed of the messages of Arabi, sent through the Haiwatât, than of the arguments of Mûsa Nusîer.

The Tîh.

16. The plateau of the Tîh, or Desert of the Wanderings, rises to a height of four thousand feet above the sea at its southern end, and slopes down gently towards the north until it is lost in the sandy dunes fringing the Mediterranean coast.

The Tîh consists of one vast plain, intersected towards the south by deep fissures, and is broken in places with mountain ranges, the principal of which are Jebels Rahah, Bodîa, Magâra, Yeleg, and Hilall.

17. The soil and vegetation of the Tîh is very variable. There are many places where, for eight or ten miles at a stretch, the ground is hard like rock, and covered with pieces of broken flint, without a scrap of vegetation of any kind. In other places the ground is for miles as smooth as a bowling-alley, with a hard, compact, white surface, with no place for vegetation. In other parts there are stretches of hard sand, with scanty shrubs here and there.

But traversing all these there are to be found, at intervals, broad, shallow water-courses called *seils*. These are, in many

cases, a hundred yards or more wide, and in them are to be found shrubs all the year round, and after heavy rains the grass springs up in them, and there is good pasture for several weeks for camels, sheep, and goats. These *seils* are very slightly depressed below the general surface of the ground, and when the rain falls they present the appearance of broad rivers, a hundred yards across, and from one to four feet deep. These waters might be run into dams, as is done in South Africa, and kept for summer use.

18. The so-called *Brook of Egypt*, or Wadi el Arîsh, is a large *seil* commencing at the southern end of the Tih, and running a course of about a hundred and fifty miles before it enters the Mediterranean near El Arîsh. This river is, as a rule, a dry and shallow water-course, but at times, for a few hours, it is quite full of water to a depth of three to four feet. The beds of the large *seils* are very uneven, and the water will lie in the pot-holes for some weeks after heavy rains. Generally in January and February there is plenty of rain over the Tîh—so much so that water for drinking, both for man and for herds, can be found every few miles in the plain, and all over the hills. During November, December, and March, there are often dense mists, moist fogs, and heavy dews, which saturate the shrubs with moisture, and even deposit moisture among the rocks, so that flocks do not require to go to water. These mists depend upon the wind, and often alternate with intense droughts.

19. The rainfall may, perhaps, be roughly estimated at twelve inches per annum, and appears to be considerably in excess of many of the pasture-lands of South Africa. In fact, a great portion even of the desert proper only differs in degree from the sheep-farms of South Africa. It will always remain more or less a desert at certain times of the year, but it is a desert which might, with advantage, be inhabited by farmers with settled homes.

20. There are very few springs in the Tîh, and during the summer the Bedouin are often in great straits for water. The principal permanent springs may be enumerated :—

Along the western edge of the Tîh platform, Marbook, Ayun Mûsa, Wadi Sadr, Elifi, and Ghurundel.

In the Sinaitic Peninsula, the springs about Jebel Mûsa, Wadi Feirân, Wadi Hebran, and Tor.

On the Tîh, the springs in the Wadi el Arîsh, springs at Magâra, and in the sand-dunes about Mahada and Gatié where there is fresh water near the surface over a stretch of several square miles.

21. As it is known that there are not only goats, but also a great number of sheep in the desert, it is obvious that there must be food for them. Sheep do not thrive during the hot weather, and at that time are not found to be such good mutton as goat. These sheep are of a very hardy nature, and ewes great with young have been known to travel thirty miles a day for four days without injury. When on the line of march they generally first suffer from abrasion of their heavy tails.

The price asked for a sheep in the desert is four times that asked in the Jordan Valley, and they often cannot be obtained under twenty-five to thirty shillings. This excessive price indicates that there is a difficulty in rearing them. During the time we were in the desert, from September to March, we were not able to obtain any milk from the goats or sheep, except during the last month. In Palestine, the sheep give milk during the winter.

There are no cattle of any kind in the desert. The only domestic animals seen were sheep, goats, dogs, donkeys, camels, and horses. The latter are only found in the pasture-lands between El Arîsh and Gaza, and towards the South Country. Horses can be taken all over the desert, provided camels are taken with them with a supply of water.

22. The Bedouin congregate together during the summer and autumn near the springs of water and palm-groves. In the spring, they have grass and water everywhere, and are free to go where they like. In the winter, they are in great straits, for they have to go where they can find herbage, and yet they have to drive their flocks to water, sometimes a distance of twenty or more miles. This they do about twice a week, sending the

camels for water for their camp when their supply has quite run out.

When visiting camps it was not unusual for Bedouin to show that they had not a drop of water, even for making coffee, until the arrival of their camels; and I have sometimes found it necessary to provide the water for making their coffee, which, however, they have always scrupulously offered to return as soon as they have been enabled to do so.

23. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the Bedouin of this desert do not grow corn. Each tribe has its cultivated land (as well as its palm-groves), and they grow as much corn as they require for their sustenance. There are extensive *mazeira* in Wadi er Raj, on the Tîh itself, and in various out-of-the-way places which travellers do not see. Near Wadi Sadr, on the summit of Jebel Rahah, at a height of 2290 feet, is a large tract of *mazeira*, on which the Dubûr and Terebîn grow their corn. This spot is chosen both because the soil is fertile and because the sea-breezes, charged with moisture, deposit water, in the form of rain or mists, on the high grounds early in the morning. In other cases, the Bedouin have joint lands with the Fellahîn living on the outskirts of the occupied lands of Egypt and Palestine. A family or portion of a family of Bedouin will go a hundred miles or more, quite beyond their tribe, to cultivate land for corn.

The connection of the tribes one with another is difficult for Europeans to comprehend; it seems so contrary to the whole rules of Bedoui life as usually laid down. All the desert tribes have their allies or relations among the Bedouin or Fellahîn in the cultivated portions of Palestine and Egypt. For example, the Aligât tribe of the Towâra are allied by marriage with the Nofiât of the Nile. No doubt this was at first dictated by policy in order to secure themselves friends respectively in the desert or cultivated country; but it cuts both ways, and anybody who takes the trouble to investigate and understand these relationships will find it comparatively easy to make arrangements with tribes in the desert, however far they may be. In fact, with a reliable government in Egypt and Palestine, the desert ought to

be a safer place for life or property than any large European town possibly can be.

The Sandy Dunes about the Coast of the Mediterranean and Suez Canal.

24. These dunes are gradually sweeping onwards, and have already engulphed the old pasture-lands of Goshen. They are caused, for the most part, by the blown sands of the sea-shore, which are constantly moved inland by the prevailing wind. The process is as follows: The sand, when blown inland from the sea-shore, moves forward slowly in a succession of small waves, about one-and-a-half inches from crest to crest. Each wave has a gentle slop of about ten degrees towards the direction of the wind, while on the lee side it has an abrupt slope of about thirty degrees. Each grain of sand is blown up the gentle slope, and falls by its own weight down the steep slope; thus the waves themselves have a small progressive motion. These small waves, from one cause or another, accumulate into large waves, which in some instances rise to the height of three hundred to four hundred feet. These large waves, like the small ones, have a gentle slope towards the wind, and a steep slope away from the wind. The sand falling down the steep slope at certain times makes a peculiar musical note from the vibration of the particles. These large sand-waves, or dunes, are continually in motion. The motion is rendered very conspicuous, owing to the effect it has on the telegraph-line between El Kantâra and El Arîsh. Telegraph-poles placed near or in the hollows soon get covered up if not constantly moved, and those towards the crests of the dunes are left suspended in the air. The palm-trees at Gatié, in the same manner, are covered up for a while, and subsequently exposed. The shifting dunes extend inland from the sea to a distance of from fifty to eighty miles, as far as Jebel Yeleg and Jebel Hilall, and are only arrested in their onward course by the mountain ranges. In some cases the outlines of these ranges, as in Jebel Rahah, are quite covered up. There cannot be any extensive growth of shrubs on sand so continually

shifting, and there can be no springs of water—with certain exceptions which are mentioned below.

The district of these sand-dunes is looked upon with a certain amount of awe by the Bedouin, who rarely traverse it during the hot months, as water is so scarce, and there is danger if they lose their way.

The exceptional springs are those such as at Mahada, about thirty miles from Ismailia, which have been preserved in a remarkable manner. They are the old springs which were in use many hundreds, probably thousands, of years ago—possibly the springs used by the children of Israel living in Goshen. As the sands encroached, the shepherds using these springs have carried the sand away from their immediate neighbourhood, and this going on for hundreds of years has resulted in craters in the sand three hundred to four hundred feet deep, at the bottom of which the springs are found. The Land of Goshen is thus engulfed by the sand-dunes, but it is there still underneath the sand, and fertile as in days gone by.

About Gatié, between Ismailia and Lake Sirbonis, there is fresh water underneath the soil in many places at a depth of a few feet, and here there are forests of palms, said to number seventy thousand These are the property of the various tribes and families inhabiting the desert.

APPENDIX D.

THE following is a glossary of the Arabic words used in the foregoing pages:—

Abba	A black, square-cut cloak, used by the Bedouin.
Ain	A spring of water.
Araki	A liqueur distilled from dates.
Bakshîsh	A gift.
Bedan	A mountain goat (ibex).
Biltong	A Cape-Dutch word for meat which has been cut into strips, salted, and dried in the sun.
Bosta	A proclamation.
Boulak-bashi..	A sergeant-major.
Chowîsh	A Sergeant.
Dukolîa	A province of Egypt, centred at Mansoorah.
Falakak	A tourniquet — a staff with bight of rope attached, in which the feet of the person to be bastinadoed is held. The rope is tightened by twisting the staff, which is held by two men.
Gieh	Fat from the tail of a sheep.
Hurudge	Saddle-bags, which form part of a camel's saddle.
Jihâd	A holy war, which it is the duty of all Moslems to engage in.
Kaaba	Portion of the temple at Mecca.
Kadi	A judge and authority in spiritual matters.
Kalyûb	A province of Egypt, centred at Benha.
Kefiyeh	A silk scarf worn on the head, generally over a white scull-cap or *takîyeh*.

Khamsîn ..... A hot wind, which blows only during a period of fifty days in the year.

Kibleh ..... The direction of Mecca.

Kourbash ..... A thong of hippopotamus-hide for administering the bastinado.

Mahafiz ..... The government office in a small town.

Mazeira ..... Corn-grounds.

Muderîa ..... The government house of a *Mudîr*.

Mudîr ..... Governor of a province.

Nazir ..... A deputy governor.

Nimr ..... A leopard.

Seil ..... A flood. It is used also for a water-course

Shadoof ..... A rude appliance for lifting water.

Shurkîa ..... A province of Egypt centred at Zagazig.

Talaf ..... A dish of rice mixed with *gieh*.

Wadi ..... A water-course, generally dry but swept by torrents.

Wakîl ..... A vice-governor.

Zaptieh ..... A policeman.

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